Imprimatur,

Sam. Parker.

April 9. 1670.

A DISCOURSE Concerning the DIFFICULTIES OF The Way to Happiness; *Whence* they *Arise*, and *How* they may be *Overcome*.

With an ACCOUNT of The *Shortness* and *Vanity* OF THE Animal Religion:

In which the *False Marks* of *Godliness* are Discovered, Whereby many deceive themselves into an Opinion of their Extraordinary Saintship.

By *Jos. Glanvil*, A.M. Rector of *Bath*.

London, Printed for *James Collins*, at the *Kings-head* in *Westminster-hall*, 1670.

'90.00410

THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

THE Author of this Diſcourſe, being deſired to Preach, at a place where he was, from home; He recollected the Sermon which he had laſt delivered in his own Congregation, and made uſe of that. It ſeems

there were present *who chanced to* mistake *his* meaning *in* some things, *not* inconsiderable. *To* satisfie *some of* those, *he* writ down *the Discourse while 'twas yet* fresh *in his* memory, *intending it for the* sight *of* two *or* three, *by whom he was so* unhappy *as to be* misapprehended. *Before those went out of his hands, I had,* accidentally, *a* sight *of* them *in his* Chamber, *and thought they might be* very fit *for the* pub-

'lique

lique view, *to which I desired they might be* exposed. *Because the* Subject *is* great, *and* grave; *and the* Discourse, *in my Judgment, gives a* very clear *and* intelligible *account of the* real difficulties *of* Religion, *and the* way *to* overcome *them; both which are too usually handled in* Phrases *and* Confusions. *By which it will appear, that those whom some are pleased in* scorn, *to call the* Rational Divines, *do not make*

the way to Heaven *so* easie, *as those* Maligners *of them*, affirm *of their* Doctrines: *But indeed* represent *it* so *as the* Scripture *hath done to their* hands.

Besides which, I *found in* this Discourse, *a very* plain *and* practicable *method to* act *by*, *in order to ones being* good *and* happy; *even such a one as seems to me very* apt *to* incourage *our* endeavours, *and* soberly *and* safely *to* direct

direct *us in* them. *For it is not made up of* Metaphors, *or* dark Generals, *or* disputable Notions, *or numerous* confused Particulars: *But of things* fairly *to be* understood, *and* certainly *to be* practised, *and* easily *to be* remembred; *and* such *as tend all to the* perfection *of* our natures. *I thought also that many* considerable things *in* Religion *were stated very* sensibly *and* clearly *in these Papers, and a* ground *laid*

to deliver the minds of men from many vain *and* unsound *Notions, which have much* perverted *and* depraved *the* true, sober, practical *Divinity.*

But the chiefest thing for which I desired its Publication, *was, Because it so* plainly *and* distinctly *detects one of the* greatest, *most* popular, *and most* dangerous Impostures *of our age, by discovering* how far *the* meer Animal Religion *may go; and*

how

how little *it really ſignifies, notwithſtanding its* glorious ſhews *and* pretences. *By this part of the Diſcourſe, many may ſee how much they have been* miſtaken *in the opinion of their own* Godlineſs; *and that the things of which they have been ſo* enamoured, *have nothing* Divine *or* Supernatural *in them. I ſay, for ſuch* Reaſons, *I was* deſirous *that this Diſcourſe ſhould be* publique. *The* Author *at firſt was* averſe *to it, but at length*

length he gave it me *to do with it what I pleased: And in* gratitude *for the* kindness, *I think fit to do him that* right, *to give* this account *of the* occasion *of its* coming abroad.

And to this I am to add, That though this Discourse was never written *till after it had been* publickly delivered; *yet for the* satisfaction *of* those *that* mistook *it*, *I* assure *them from the* Author, *That here is all that was* spoken, *and for*

for the moſt part the ſame order *and* words, *only the* Inferences, *and ſome other things up and down* are added, *but nothing that he knows* omitted. *I ſhall preſume to add no more, but now remit the Reader to the Book it ſelf.*

William Allen.

The Way to Happiness.

Luke XII. 24.

Strive to enter in at the ſtraight Gate: For many, I ſay unto you, ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN I conſider the *goodneſs* of God; and the *merits* of his Son, our Saviour; and the *Influences* of the Holy Spirit; and all the *advanta-*

ges of the Goſpel; The *certainty* of its Principles, the *reaſonableneſs* of its duties, the *greatneſs* of its ends, the *ſutableneſs* of its means, the *Glory* of its Rewards, and the *Terrour of its puniſhments*;. I ſay, when I conſider *theſe*, and then look upon *Man* as a *reaſonable* Creature, apprehenſive of *Duty*, and *intereſt*, and apt to be moved by *hopes* and *fears*; I cannot but wonder, and be aſtoniſht to think, that notwithſtanding *all this*, the far greater part of men ſhould finally miſcarry, and be undone. 'Tis poſſible *ſome* ſuch *Conſiderations* might be the occaſion of the *Queſtion* propounded to our Saviour in the verſe immediately foregoing the Text —— *Lord, are there Few that be ſaved?* *God* is *Love*, and all the Creatures are *His*, and man a noble

noble ſort; *He* is the *Lover* of *Men*, and *Thou* art the *Redeemer* of Men; And though *Man* hath *offended*, yet God is propenſe to *pardon*, and in *Thee* he is reconciled; He is deſirous of our happineſs, and Thou art come into the world to offer, and promote it; and the *Holy Ghoſt* is *powerful* and *ready* to aſſiſt our indeavours; We were made for happineſs, and we ſeek it; And —— *Lord*, *are there Few that be ſaved?* The Text is Chriſt's return to the Queſtion, *Strive to enter in at the ſtraight Gate; for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter, and ſhall not be able.* In which words we have three things.

(I) An Anſwer imply'd; *Straight is the Gate.*

(II) A duty expreſt, *Strive to enter.*

(III) A Consideration to ingage our greater care and diligence in the Duty; *For many will seek to enter, and shall not be able.*

By the *Gate* we may understand the entrance, and all the way of Happiness, and that is, *Religion*; By the *straightness* of it, the *Difficulties* we are to encounter; By *striving*, earnest and sincere *endeavour*: By *seeking*, an *imperfect striving*; And from the words thus briefly explain'd, These Propositions offer themselves to our Consideration.

I. **There are many and great difficulties in Religion,** *The Gate is straight.*

II. **The Difficulties may be overcome by striving,** *Strive to enter.*

III. There

III. **There is a ſort of ſtriving that will not procure an entrance,** *For many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.*

CHAP. I.

There are great **Difficulties** *in* Religion. *Religion is not hard to be underſtood. The* Difficulties *ariſe* (1) *from the* Depravities *of our* Natures, (2) *from the* Influences *of the* ſenſes, (3) *from the* diſorder *of our* paſſion, (4) *from the* power *of* Cuſtom, (5) *from* evil example, *and* (6)

from worldly intereſts *and* ingagements.

Sect. I.

I Begin with the *FIRST* in order, *viz.* **That there are many and great difficulties in Religion**; And to what I have to ſay about it, I premiſe this negative Conſideration, That the *Difficulties* of *Religion* do not lye in the *UNDERSTANDING*. *Religion* is a *plain* thing, and *eaſie* to be *underſtood*. 'Tis no *deep* ſubtilty, or *high-ſtrain'd* notion; 'tis no *gilded* phancy, or *elaborate* exerciſe of the brain; 'Tis not plac'd in the *clouds* of Imagination, nor wrapt up in *myſtical* cloathing; But 'tis *obvious* and *familiar*, *eaſie* and *intelligible*; Firſt preach't by *Fiſhermen*,

and

and *Mechanicks*, without pomp of ſpeech, or height of ſpeculation; addreſt to *Babes* and *Plebeian* heads; and intended to govern the *wills* of the *honeſt*, and *ſincere*; and not to exerciſe the *wits* of the *notional*, and *curious*. So that we need not mount the *wings* of the *wind* to fetch *Religion* from the *ſtars*; nor go down to the *deep* to fetch it *up* from thence; For 'tis *with us*, and *before us*, as *open* as the *day*, and as *familiar* as the *light*. The *great Præcepts* of the Goſpel are cloathed in Sun-beams, and are as viſible to the *common* eye, as to the *Eagle* upon the higheſt perch. 'Tis no piece of *wit* or *ſubtilty* to be a *Chriſtian*, nor will it require much ſtudy, or learned retirement to *underſtand* the Religion we muſt practiſe. That which

was to be *known* of *God*, was *manifeſt* to the very Heathen, *Rom.* i. 19. *The Law is light*, ſaith *Solomon. Prov.* vi. 13. And 'tis not only a ſingle paſſing glance on the eye; but 'tis *put into the heart*, and the promiſe is, that *we ſhall all know him, from the greateſt to the leaſt.* Our *duty* is ſet up in open places, and ſhone upon by a clear beam; 'I was written of old upon the *plain* Tables of *Habakkuk*, *Hab.* ii. 2. So that the *running eye* might *ſee and read*: And the *Religion* of the *H. Jeſus*, like *himſelf*, came into the world with *rayes* about its head.

Religion, I ſay, is *clear*, and *plain*, and what is not *ſo*, may concern the *Theatre*, or the *Schools*; may entertain mens *wits*, and ſerve the intereſt of *diſputes*; But 'tis nothing to *Religion*, 'tis nothing to the

intereſt

intereſt of mens ſouls.

Religion was once a *Myſtery*, but the Myſtery is *revealed*; And thoſe things that we yet count *Myſteries*, are *plainly* enough diſcover'd as to their *being ſuch* as we believe them, though we cannot underſtand the *manner how*; and 'tis no part of *Religion* to *inquire* into that, but rather *It* injoins us meekly to acquieſce in the plain declarations of Faith without *bold* ſcrutiny into *hidden things*. In ſhort then I ſay, the *difficulties of Religion are not in the Underſtanding*; *In prompto & Facili eſt æternitas*, ſaid the Father; The affairs of eternity depend on things *eaſie* and *Familiar*. And I premiſe this to prevent dangerous miſtakes.

But though Religion be ſo facile, and plain a thing to be underſtood, yet the *way* to *Heaven* is

no

no *broad*, or *easie Path*; The *Gate is straight* enough for all that; and I now come to shew what are the *reall difficulties* of *Religion*, and whence they arise.

Sect. II.

One great Difficulty ariseth from the *depravity* of our *natures*. The Scripture intimates, *That we are conceived in sin*, Psalm lv. 5. *Trangressours from the womb*, Isaiah xlviii. 8. and *Children of wrath*, Ephes. ii. 3. And we find by *experience* that we bring *vile* inclinations into the world with us. *Some* are *naturally* cruel, and injurious; proud and imperious; lustful, and revengeful: *Others*, Covetous, and unjust; humoursome, and discontented; treacherous,

cherous, and falſe. And there is ſcarce an inſtance of *habitual* vice, or villany, but ſome or other are addicted to it by their *particular make and natures*: I ſay, their *natures*, for certainly it is not true what ſome affirm (to ſerve their opinions) in contradiction to experience; That *vices are not in mens natural propenſions; but inſtil'd by corrupt education, evil cuſtoms and examples*: For we ſee that thoſe whoſe *education* hath been the *ſame*, do yet *differ* extreamly from each other in their *inclinations*; And *ſome*, whoſe breeding hath been *careleſs* and *looſe*, who have ſeen almoſt nothing elſe but examples of *vice*; and been inſtructed in *little*, beſides the arts of *Vanity* and *pleaſure*; I ſay, there are *ſuch* who notwithſtanding theſe their *unhappy* circumſtances,

cumſtances, diſcover none of thoſe *vile* inclinations, and propenſions, that are in *others* whoſe *education* hath been very *ſtrict* and *advantageous*. This I think is enough to ſhew that many of our evil habits are from *nature*, and not from *cuſtom* only.

And yet I cannot ſay that *Humane Nature* is *ſo* debaucht, that *every man* is inclin'd to *every evil* by *it*: For there are *thoſe*, who by their *tempers* are *averſe* to ſome kind of vices, and *naturally* diſpoſed to the *contrary vertues*; *ſome* by their *conſtitutions* are inclined to *hate Cruelty*, *Covetouſneſs*, *lying*, *impudence*, and *injuſtice*, and are by *temper merciful*, *liberal*, *modeſt*, *true*, and *juſt*. There are *kinds* of *vices* which our natures almoſt *univerſally* riſe againſt, as many *beſtialities*,

alities, and ſome *horrid Cruelties*; And *all* men, except *Monſters* in humane form, are diſpoſed to *ſome* vertues, ſuch as *Love* to *Children*, and *kindneſs* to *friends*, and *Benefactors*. All this I muſt confeſs and ſay, becauſe *experience* conſtrains me; and I do not know why *Syſtematick notions* ſhould ſway more then *that*.

But notwithſtanding *theſe* laſt conceſſions, 'tis evident enough that our natures are much *vitiated*, and *depraved*; and *this* makes our buſineſs in the way of Religion, *difficult*. For our work is, to *cleanſe* our *Natures*, and to *deſtroy* thoſe *evil Inclinations*, to *crucifie the old man*, Rom. vi. 6. and to *purge out the old leven*, 1 Cor. v. 7. *This* is *Religion*, and the *way* of happineſs, which muſt needs be very

difficult,

difficult, and *uneaſie*. For the vices of *Inclination* are very *dear*, and *grateful* to us; They are our *right hands*, and our *right eyes*, and eſteemed as *our ſelves*: So that to *cut* off, and *pluck* out *theſe*, and to bid defiance to, and wage war againſt our ſelves; to deſtroy the firſt-born of our natures, and to lop off our own limbs; This cannot but be very *irkſom* and *diſpleaſant* imployment, & this is one chief buſineſs; and a conſiderable thing that makes *Religion difficult*.

Sect. III.

II. ANother *difficulty* ariſeth from the *Influence* of the *Senſes*. We are creatures of *ſenſe*, and ſenſible things do moſt powerfully move us; we are born *Children*, and live at firſt the *life* of *beaſts*.

beaſts. *That* Age receives *deep* impreſſions, and thoſe are made by the *ſenſes*, whoſe intereſt grows *ſtrong*, and eſtabliſht in us before we come to the *uſe* of *reaſon*; and after we have arrived to the exerciſe of *that*, ſenſible objects ſtill *poſſeſs* our *affections*, and *ſway* our *wills*, and *fill* our *Imaginations*, and *influence* our *Underſtandings*; ſo that we *love*, and *hate*; we *deſire* and *chooſe*, we *phancy*, and we *diſcourſe* according to thoſe *impreſſions*; And hence it is that we are *enamour'd* of *trifles*, and *fly* from our *happineſs*; and *purſue Vexation*, and *embrace miſery*; and *imagine perverſely*, and *reaſon childiſhly*: For the influence of the body, and its ſenſes are the chief Fountains of of *ſin*, and *Folly* and *Temptation*: Upon which accounts it was that the *Platonical Philoſophers* declaim'd

ſo

ſo *earneſtly* againſt the *body*, and aſcrib'd all *evils*, and miſchief to it, calling *vice* κακια ἕνυλος, *corporeæ peſtes*, *material evils*, and *bodily plagues*. And the Apoſtle that underſtood it better, calls *ſin* by the name of *Fleſh*. Gal. v. 17. *Works of the fleſh*, Gal. v. 19. *Law of the Members*, Rom. vii. 23. and cries out upon the *body of this death*, Rom. vii. 24.

And now this is our *natural* condition, a *ſtate* ſubject to the *prevalent* influences of *ſenſe*, and ſo *ſin*, and *temptation* by them; And 'tis our *work* in Religion, to *mortifie the body*, Rom. viii. 13. *and to ceaſe from making proviſion for the Fleſh*, Rom. xiii. 14. and from *fulfilling the luſts thereof*, Gal. v. 14. To render our ſelves *dead* to the prevalent life of ſenſe, and ſin,

Rom.

Rom. vi. 8. and 11. *v.* and to *arise* to a *new Life*, Rom. vi 4. The *Life* of *righteousness*, and *Faith*, Hab. ii. 4 A *Life* that hath other *Principles*, and other *pleasures*; other *objects*, and other *ends*, and *such* as neither *eye hath seen*, nor *ear heard*, nor any of the senses perceived. Yea, *this* is a Life that is exercised in *contradiction* to the judgments of *sense*. Its *joy*, is *Tribulation*, *Jam.* i. 2. It's *Glory*, *reproaches*, 2 *Pet.* iv. 14. It's *height*, is *lowness*, *Luke* xiv. 11. It's *greatness*, in being *meanest*, *Mat.* xx. 27. And it's riches, in having nothing, 2 *Cor.* vi. 10. To such a Life as *this*, Religion is to raise us; and it must needs be *difficult* to make *us*, who are *so* much *Brutes*, to be *so* much *Angels*; *us*, who seem to live by nothing *else* but *sense*, to live by *no-*

thing leſs; This with a witneſs is an *hard*, and *uneaſie* work, and another *difficulty* in *Religion*.

Sect. IV.

(III.) A *Third* proceeds from the natural *diſorder*, and *rage* of our *paſſions*. Our Corrupt natures are like the *troubled Sea*, *Iſa.* lvii. 20. And our *paſſions* are the *waves* of that Ocean, that tumble and ſwell, and keep a mighty noiſe; They daſh againſt the rocks, and break one againſt another; and our peace, and happineſs is ſhipwrackt by them. *Our paſſions make us miſerable.* We are ſometimes *ſtifled* by their *numbers*, and *confounded* by their *diſorders*, and *torn* to pieces by their *violence*; mounted to the clouds by *ambition*, and

and thrown down to the *deep* by *deſpair*; ſcorcht by the *flames* of *Luſt*, and *overwhelm'd* by the *waters* of unſtable *deſire*; *Paſſions* fight *one againſt another*, and *all* againſt reaſon; they prevail over the mind, and have *uſurpt* the Government of our Actions, and involve us in continual guilt, and miſery. This is the *natural* ſtate of man; and our *work* in the way of *Religion*, is to *reſtrain* this *violence*, and to *rectifie* theſe *diſorders*, and to *reduce* thoſe *rebellious* powers under the Empire, and Government of the *mind*, their *Soveraign*. And ſo to *regain* the divine *image*, which conſiſts much in the *order* of our *faculties*; and the *ſubjection* of the *Brutiſh*, to the *reaſonable* powers. *This*, I ſay, Religion aims at, to raiſe us to the *perfection* of our natures,

by *mortifying* thoſe *members*, Col. iii 5. our *unruly paſſions* and *deſires*; and *crucifying* the *fleſh* with its *affections*, *and luſts*, Gal. v. 24. And thereby to make us *humble* in *Proſperity*, *quiet* in *Adverſity*; *meek* under *provocations*, *ſteady* amidſt *temptations*; *modeſt* in our *deſires*, *temperate* in our *injoyments*; *conſtant* to our *reſolutions*, and *contented* in all *conditions*. Here is our great buſineſs, and our *work is this*: And certainly 'tis no *eaſie* thing to bring *order* out of a *Chaos*, and to ſpeak a *tempeſt* into a *calm*; to *reſiſt* a *torrent*, and to *ſtop* and *turn* the *tyde*; to *ſubdue* a *rebellious* rabble, and to change them from *tyrannical* Maſters, to *modeſt* and *obedient* ſervants; Theſe, no doubt, are works of *difficulty* enough, and theſe muſt be our imployment in the way

of

of *Religion*; and on this ſcore alſo, the *Gate is ſtraight.*

Sect. V.

(IV.) OUR *work* in *Religion* is yet more *difficult*, upon the account of *Cuſtom*, to which we are ſubject, and by which we are ſwayed much. *This* is vulgarly ſaid to be *another nature*, and the Apoſtle calls it by *that* name, 1 Cor. xi. 14. *Doth not nature it ſelf teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a ſhame unto him?* By the word *Nature*, the beſt Interpreters ſay onely *Cuſtom* is meant; ſince *long hair* is not declared *ſhameful* by the Law, and Light of Nature, taken in it's chief, and propereſt ſenſe: For then it had never been permitted to the *Nazarites*: But the *contrary cuſtom*,

in the Nations that uſed it not, made it ſeem *ſhameful* and *indecent*. There are other places in Scripture, and antient Authors, wherein *Nature* is put for *Cuſtom*: But I muſt not inſiſt on *this*; the thing I am about is, That *cuſtom* is very *powerful*; and as it makes a kind of Nature, ſo, many times, it *maſters* and *ſubdues it*. Wild creatures are hereby made gentle and familiar; and thoſe that naturally are tame enough are made to degenerate into wildneſs by it.

And now beſides the *original* depravities of our natures, we have *contracted* many *vitious habits* by *corrupt* and *evil* uſages; which we were drawn into at firſt by pleaſure, and vanity in our young and inconſiderate years, while we were led by the directions of ſenſe:

Theſe,

Theſe, by *frequent* acts, grow at laſt into *habits*, which though in their beginning they were *tender* as a plant, and eaſie to have been cruſht or blaſted; yet *time* and *uſe* hardens them into the *firmneſs* of an *Oak*, that braves the weather, and can endure the ſtroak of the Axe, and a ſtrong arm.

Now to deſtroy and root up theſe obſtinate *cuſtomary* evils, is another part of our work. And Religion teacheth us to *put off concerning the old converſation the old man*, Epheſ. iv. 22. and to receive *new impreſſions* and *inclinations*; to be *renewed* in the *ſpirit of our minds*, v. 23. and to *put on the new man*, v. 24. To make *us new hearts*, Ezek. xviii. 31. and *to walk in newneſs of life*, Rom. vi. 4. *This* we are to do, and this we may well ſuppoſe to be *hard*

work; the Scripture compares it to the *changing* the *skin* of the *Æthiopian*, and the *ſpots* of the *Leopard*, Jer. xiii. 23. and elſewhere. *How can they do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil?* Jer. xiii. 23. 'Tis *hard*, no doubt; and this is another *difficulty* in *Religion*.

(V.) The power that *Example* hath over us, makes the *way* of *Religion difficult*. *Example* is more *prevalent* than *precept*, for man is a creature given much to *imitation*, and we are very apt to follow what we *ſee others do*, rather than what we *ought to do our ſelves*.

And now the Apoſtle hath told us, That *the whole world lies in wickedneſs*, 1 Joh. v. 19. and we ſadly find it: we cannot look out of doors, but we ſee *vanity* and *folly*,

ſenſu-

ſenſuality, and *forgetfulneſs* of God: *Pride* and *Covetouſneſs*, *Injuſtice* and *Intemperance*, and all other kinds of evils: Theſe we meet with every where, in *publick* companies, and *private* converſations; in the *high wayes*, and in the *corners* of the *ſtreets*.

The ſum is, *Example* is very *powerful*, and *examples* of *Vice* are always in our eyes; we are apt to be reconciled to *that*, which *every one doth*, and to do like it; we love the *trodden path*, and care not to walk in the *way* which is gone in but by a *few*.

This is our *condition*, and our *work* in *Religion* is, to *overcome* the ſtrong biaſs of corrupt *example*; to *ſtrive* againſt the *ſtream*, to learn to be *good*, though *few* are *ſo*, and not to follow *a multitude to do evil*,

Exod.

Exod. xxiii. 2. *This* is our *busineſs*; and *this* is very *difficult*.

Sect. VI.

(VI.) THE laſt *difficulty* I ſhall mention, ariſeth from *Worldly intereſt* and *engagements*. We have many *neceſſities* to ſerve, both in our Perſons, and our Families. Nature excluded us *naked* into the World, without *cloathing* for *warmth*, or *armature* for *defence*; and *food* is not provided to our hands, as it is for the Beaſts, nor do our *houſes* grow for our habitation, and comfortable abode. Nothing is prepared for our uſe without our induſtry, and endeavours. So that by the *neceſſity* of *this ſtate*, we are engaged in *worldly affairs*: *Theſe*, *Nature* requires us to mind, and *Religion*

gion permits it; And nothing can be done without our *care*; and *care* would be very *troubleſome*, if there were not ſome *love* to the *objects* we exerciſe our cares upon: Hence it is, that *ſome cares* about the things of *this* world, and *love* to them, is allowed us; and we are commanded to continue in the *Calling wherein God hath ſet us*, 1 Cor. vii. 20. and are warned that we be not *ſlothful in buſineſs*, Rom. xii. 11. We may take *ſome delight* alſo in the Creatures that God gives us, and *love* them in their *degree*: For the *Animal* life may have its *moderate qualifications*; *God made all things, that they might enjoy their Being.*

And now, notwithſtanding all *this*, Religion commands us to *ſet our affections upon things above*, Col. iii. 2. not to *love the World*, 1 Joh. ii. 15.

ii. 15. to be *careful for nothing*, Phil. iv. 6. to take no *thought for to morrow*, Mat. vi. 34. The meaning of which expreſſions is, That we ſhould *love God* and *heavenly things* in the *chief* and *firſt place*; and avoid the *immoderate* degree of *Worldly love* and *cares*. This is our *duty*; and 'tis very *difficult*: For by reaſon of the *hurry* of *buſineſs*, and thoſe *paſſions* that *earthly* engagements excite; we *conſider* not things as we ſhould, and *ſo*, many times, perceive not the *bounds* of our *permiſſions*, and the *beginnings* of our *reſtraints*; where the *allowed* meaſure *ends*, and the *forbidden* degree *commenceth*: what is the difference between that *care* that is a *duty*, and *that* which is a *ſin*; *Providence* and *Carking*; and between *that love* of the *World* which is *neceſſary* and *lawful*,

lawful, and that which is *extravagant* and *inordinate*; I ſay, by reaſon of the hurry we are in, amidſt buſineſs and worldly delights, we many times *perceive* not our *bounds*, and ſo ſlide eaſily into *earthly-mindedneſs* and *anxiety*. And it is hard for us, who are engaged ſo much in the World, and who need it ſo much, who converſe ſo much with it, and about it, and whoſe time and endeavours are ſo unavoidably taken up by it; I ſay, 'tis hard for us, in ſuch circumſtances, to be *crucified to the World*, Gal. vi. 14. and to all *inordinate affections* to it; to live *above* it, and to ſettle our *chief* delights and cares on things at great *diſtance* from us, which are *unſutable* to our *corrupt* appetites, and *contrary* to the moſt *reliſhing injoyments* of *fleſh*; which

ſenſe

ſenſe never *ſaw* nor *felt*, and which the *imagination* it ſelf could never *graſp*. *This*, no doubt, is *hard exerciſe*, and this muſt be done in the *way* of *Religion*; and on this account alſo, it is very *difficult*.

Thus of the FIRST *Propoſition*, **That there are great difficulties in Religion.** I come now to the SECOND.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

That the Difficulties may be overcome. *The* Instruments *whereby it may be done, viz.* Faith, Prayer, *and* active endeavour. *They are* particularly *consider'd. The* Method *of endeavour proposed in* plain *and* practicable Rules. *Some* Qualifications *of* those Rules.

Sect. I.

(II.) **That those Difficulties may be overcome by striving**; which imports both the

the *Encouragement*, and the *Means*; That *THEY MAY BE VANQUISHT*; and *HOW*.

(I.) That the **Difficulties may be ſubdued**, is clearly enough implyed, in the *Precept*; We ſhould not have been commanded to *ſtrive*, if it had been *impoſſible* to overcome. God doth not put his Creatures upon *fruitleſs* undertakings: He never requires us to do any thing in order to *that*, which is not to be *attained*. Therefore when he was reſolved not to be intreated for that ſtubborn and Rebellious Nation, He would not have the Prophet pray for them, *Jer.* vii. 16. *Pray not for this people, for I will not hear thee.* He would not be *petitioned* for *that*, which he was determined not to *grant*. He puts not his Creatures upon any *vain* expecta-

tions

tions, and endeavours; nor would he have them deceive themselves, by fond dependences. When one made this Profession to our Saviour, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, Christ tells him, that he must expect from him no worldly honours, or preferments; no power or sensual pleasure, no, not so much as the ordinary accommodations of Life. *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head*, Luk. ix. 5. 8. He would not have the man, that likely might look for *these*, upon the opinion of his being the *Messias*, in the *Jewish* sense, one that should at last, whatever the meanness of his condition was at present, appear as a *Mighty*, and *Triumphant temporal Monarch*; I say, our Saviour would not have the

Man follow Him for *that*, which he had not to beſtow upon him. Since then that he who would not put us upon *fruitleſs* labours, hath *commanded* us to *ſtrive* to *enter*; 'tis evident, that an entrance may be procured into the gate by *ſtriving*, and that the *difficulty* **may** *be overcome.*

Sect. II.

THE next thing in my method is to ſhew, **How**; The *manner* is *implied* in the *Text*; and *expreſt* in the *Propoſition*, *viz.* By **ſtriving**; and by *this*, is meant, a *reſolute* uſe of thoſe means that are the Inſtruments of happineſs. They are three, **Faith, Prayer** and **active Endeavour**.

(I.) **Faith** is a *chief* Inſtrument, for the *overcoming* the *Difficulties*, I have mentioned. And *Faith* in

the

the *general*, is the *belief* of a *Teſti-mony*; *Divine Faith* the belief of a *Divine* Teſtimony; and the chief things to be believed, as *encourage-ments* and *means* for a victory over the Difficulties in Religion, are *theſe*; *That God is reconciled to us by his Son*; *That he will aſſiſt our weak endeavours by the Aids of his Spirit*; *That he will reward us, if we ſtrive as we ought, with immortal Happineſs in a world of endleſs Glory.*

By our belief of Gods being *re-conciled*, we are ſecured from thoſe *fears*, that might diſcourage our ap-proaches, and endeavours, upon the account of his *Purity*, and *Ju-ſtice*. By the *Faith* of his *Aſſiſtance*, all the *objections* againſt our *ſtriving*, that ariſe from the *greatneſs* of the *Difficulties*, and the *diſproportionate ſmalneſs* of our *ſtrength*, are anſwered.

And from our believing *eternal rewards* in another world, we have a mighty *motive* to engage our utmoſt diligence, to conteſt with all difficulties that would keep us from it.

What *ſatisfaction* is there, ſaith the believer, in the *gratification* of my *corrupt inclinations* and *ſenſes*, in compariſon with *that*, which ariſeth from the *favour* of *God*, and an *intereſt* in his *Son*? What difficulties in my *Duty*, *too* great for *Divine* Aids? What *pains* are we to undergo in the *narrow*, and *difficult* way, that the *glory* which is at the end of it, will not *compenſate*? What is it to *deny* a *baſe* inclination that will undo me; in *obedience* to Him that *made*, and *redeemed* me; and to deſpiſe the little things of *preſent* ſenſe, for the hope of *everlaſting enjoyments*; *Trifling*

ſling pleaſure, for *Hallelujahs*? What were it for me to *ſet vigorouſly* upon thoſe *Paſſions*, that degrade my noble nature, and make me a *ſlave*, and a *beaſt*, and will make me *more* vile, and *more* miſerable; when the *Spirit* of the moſt High is at my *right* hand to aſſiſt me? Why ſhould my noble Faculties, that were deſign'd for glorious ends, be led into infamous practices by *baſe uſages*, and *diſhonourable Cuſtoms*? What is the *example* of a *wicked, ſenſual wretched* world, to *that* of the *Holy Jeſus*; and all the *Army* of *Prophets*, *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs*? What is there in the *world*, that *it* ſhould be *loved* more than *God*? and what is the *Fleſh*, that it ſhould have *more* of our *time*, and *care*, than the great intereſts of our Souls?

Such are the *Considerations* of a mind, that *Faith* hath awakened; and by *them* it is prepared for *vigorous striving*. So that *Faith* is the *Spring* of *all*; and *necessary* to the other two *instruments* of our *Happiness*. Besides which, it is *acceptable* to God, in it *self*, and so disposeth us for his *gracious helps*, by which we are enabled to overcome the Difficulties of our way. While a man considers the *Difficulties* only, and weighs them against his own *strength*, Let him suppose the *Liberty* of his *will* to be what he pleaseth, yet while 'tis under *such* disadvantages, *that* will signifie very little; and he that sees no *further*, sits down in discouragement; But when the mind is fortified with the firm belief of *divine help*, he attempts then with a *noble vigour*, which

which cannot *miſcarry*, if it do not *cool* and *faint*. For *he that endures to the end, ſhall be ſaved*, Mat. xxiv. 13. Thus *Faith* ſets the other Inſtruments of Happineſs on work, and therefore 'tis deſervedly reckoned as the *firſt*; and 'tis *that* which muſt *always* accompany the *exerciſes* of *Religion*, and give them *life*, and *motion*.

Sect. II.

(II.) Prayer is another *means*, we muſt uſe, in order to our *overcoming* the *Difficulties* of the way. Our own, meer, natural *ſtrength* is *weakneſs*; and without *ſupernatural* helps thoſe Difficulties are not to be ſurmounted. *Theſe Aids* then are *neceſſary*, and *God* is *ready* to beſtow them on us; For

He would have all men to be ſaved, and *to come to the Knowledg of the Truth,* 1 Tim. ii. 4. But for *theſe things he will be ſought unto.* And 'tis very *juſt,* and *fit* that we ſhould addreſs our ſelves to him by *Prayer,* to acknowledg our own *inſufficiency,* and *dependence* on him for the mercies we expect; and thereby to own *Him* for the *giver* of *every good,* and *perfect gift*; and to inſtruct our ſelves how his favours are to be *received* and *uſed,* viz. with *reverence* and *thanksgiving*: This I ſay 'tis highly *fit* that we ſhould do; and the doing it *prepares* us for his bleſſings; and He fails not to *beſtow* them on thoſe that are *prepared* by *Faith,* and *Prayer*; *For he giveth liberally and upbraids not*; And our *Prayers* are required, not as if they could *move* his *will,*

which

which is *always* graciouſly *inclined* to our *happineſs*; But as it's *that tribute* which we owe our *Maker*, and *Benefactor*; and *that* without which, 'tis not ſo *fit* he ſhould beſtow his *particular* favours on us. For 'tis by no means becoming the Divine Majeſty, to vouchſafe the *ſpecialties* of his *Grace*, and *goodneſs* to thoſe, that are not *ſenſible* that They *want* them; and are not *humbled* to a *due* apprehenſion of their *weakneſs*, and dependence. But for ſuch as are *ſo*, and expreſs their humble deſires in the *Ardours* of *Holy Prayer*, God never *denies* them the *aſſiſtances* of his *Spirit*: *For if ye being evil* (ſaith our Saviour) *know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things to thoſe that ask Him?* Mat. vii 11. And

And *These Divine Helps* obtain'd by *Faith*, and *Prayer*, and join'd with our *active constant endeavour*, will not fail to *enable* us to *overcome* the *Difficulties*, and to procure us an entrance at the *straight gate*. And so I come to the *Third Instrument* of our *Happiness*, and *means* that we must use, implied in *striving*, viz.

Sect. III.

(III.) **Active endeavour**, in which *Repentance* and the *fruits* of it are implied; Both *Faith* and *Prayer* are in order to *this*; and without it they can neither of them turn to account. For *Faith without works is dead*, Jam. ii. 20. and *Prayer, without endeavour, fruitless*; yea indeed, in the Divine estimate, it is

none

none at all: 'Tis *bodily* exercise; *no Prayer*. For when we invoke *Gods help*, we *desire* it, that we may *use* it; *Divine grace is not a Treasure to lay up by us, but an instrument to work with*; And when we pray that God would *assist* us in our *endeavours*, and *endeavour not at all*, we *mock* God, and *trifle* with him in our Prayers: I say then, That *endeavour* is *necessary*, and necessary in a degree so eminent, that *this* is always included in *Faith* when 'tis taken in the *highest*, and noblest *evangelical sense*, viz. for the *Faith* which *justifies*, and *saves*; for *that* comprehends *all* those *endeavours*, and their *fruits*, whereby we are made happy.

We must not expect that God should do *all* (*exclusively*) in the work of our Salvation. He doth

his

his part, and we must do *ours*; (though we do *that*, by his help too.) *He that made us without our selves, will not save us without our selves*, said the Father. We are commanded to seek, *Mat* vii. 7. To *Run*, 1 Cor. ix. 24. To *fight*, 1 Tim. vi. 12. To *give diligence*, 2 Pet. i. 10. *These all* import *action*, and *endeavour*. And *that* endeavour must not be only a *faint* purpose, or *formal* service; but it must be imployed in the *highest degree* of *care*, and *diligence*. *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence*, Mat. xi. 12. and this violence must not be used in an *heat*, and *sudden* fit *only*, that *cools*, and *dies*, and contents it self with having been *warm* for a time. But it must be a *steady*, and *constant* course of *activity*, a continual *striving* to overcome the remaining *difficulties* of the *way*. We

We muſt *endeavour* then, *vigorouſly*, and *conſtantly*; and in *that*, (after our *Faith* is ſtrengthned by *deep conſideration*, and *divine aſſiſtance* implored by *ardent Prayer*) our courſe is,

(1.) *To abſtain from all the outward actions of* SIN, and *to perform the external acts of the contrary vertues To ceaſe to do evil*, Iſa. i. 16. is the firſt ſtep. When the *Publicans* askt *John* the *Baptiſt*, Luke iii. 12. what they ſhould do; His direction was, That they *ſhould not exact*, verſ 13. and to the *Souldiers* asking the ſame queſtion, he anſwers, *Do violence to no man*, verſ. 14. *Theſe* were the ſins of their *particular* Profeſſions, which were to be *quitted*, before any thing could be done *higher*. We have ordinarily more power over our *actions*, than our

habits,

habits, and therefore we ſhould *begin* here, and reſolve deeply, by divine help, to cut off thoſe *ſupplies* that feed *vitious inclinations*; For *wicked habits* are maintain'd by *actions* of *wickedneſs*; when *they* ceaſe, the *inclinations* grow more *faint*, and *weak*: And when we are come but *thus far*, to have *confined* our *luſts*, we ſhall be encouraged to proceed to deſtroy them. 'Tis ſaid, There is no great diſtance between a *Princes Priſon* and his *Grave*; The ſaying is moſt true in the Caſe of *Tyrants*, and *Uſurpers*; and the *habits* of ſin are *both*; when they are *reſtrain'd*, they are not far from being *deſtroyed*, if we imploy our endeavours, and the divine aids, as we ought.

This then I ſay, muſt be done *Firſt*, and the *other* part of the advice muſt

muſt be taken with it, *viz.* we *muſt practiſe the outward actions of the contrary vertues.* We *muſt do well*, when we *ceaſe to do evil.* When we turn from darkneſs, it muſt be to light, *Acts* xxvi. 18. Not from *one* kind of *darkneſs* to *another.* When we *ceaſe* to *oppreſs*, we muſt be *charitable*; when we leave to *tyrannize* over our *inferiours*, we muſt be *kind*, and *helpful* to them. When we forbear to *ſlander*, we muſt *ſpeak* all the *good* we can of our Neighbour.

The *outward* actions of vertue are in our *power*; and 'tis ſomewhat to come ſo far as *this*: What is *more*, viz. The *inward love and delight in goodneſs*, will ſucceed in time, if we perſevere. 'Tis not ſafe for us to propoſe to our ſelves the greateſt heights at firſt; if we do,

do, we are discouraged, and fall back. God accepts even of that *little*, if it be in order to *more*. He despiseth not the day of small things, *Zech.* iv. 10. If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? Christ *loved* the *young man* who had kept the *external* part of the *Commandments*, Mark x. 21. If he had had the courage to have proceeded; what he had done, would have steaded him much. The *inward* love of *vertue* and *holiness* is promoted by the *outward* exercises of them, and hereby the *contrary* evils are both *pined*, and *thrust out*.

Thus of the *First* thing that endeavour implies; upon this must follow next,

(II.) *An attempt upon evil habits*, viz. *Those* that have been superinduced on us by *carelessness* and *temptation*,

temptation, bad *customs*, and *evil company*. *Every victory is a means to another*; *we* grow *stronger*, and the *enemy weaker* by it. To have overcome the *outward* acts of sin, is a *beginning* in our *spiritual* warfare; but our *chief* enemies are the *habits*; *these* must be attempted also, but with *prudence*; wild *beasts* are not to be dealt with by *main strength*; Art, and stratagem must be used in this War; and 'tis *good policy*, I think here, to fight the *least* powerful foes *first*; the *contracted* habits, before we fall on the *inbred natural* inclinations. While our forces are weak, 'tis dangerous setting upon the strongest holds, *viz.* the vices of *complexion*, which are woven into our *very natures*. If a man apply all his *force* where he hath not *resolution* enough to go through with

what he undertakes, he receives a foyl, and 'tis odds but he ſits down, and faints. *Prudence* therefore is to be uſed, where we diſtruſt our ſtrength: Fall upon *ſin* then, where 'tis *weakeſt*, where it hath *leaſt* of *nature*, and leaſt of *temptation*, and where we have arguments from *reputation*, and *worldly intereſts*, wherewith to war againſt it. If we *prevail*, we are heartned by the *ſucceſs*: Our *Faith* and *reſolution* will grow *ſtronger* by this experience, when we have triumpht over the ſins of *evil cuſtom*, *example*, and *ſenſual indulgence*.

And when that is done, we muſt remember, that 'tis not enough that thoſe *habits* are thruſt out; *others* muſt be *planted* in their *room*: when the ſoyl is *prepared*, the *ſeed* muſt be ſown; and the *ſeeds* of vertuous

habits,

habits, are the *actions* of vertue. Theſe I recommended under the laſt head, and ſhall ſay more of the introducing *habits*, under *one* that follows on purpoſe.

(III.) The next advance in our endeavours, is, *In the ſtrength of God, and in the Name of his Son, to aſſault the greater Devils, and to ſtrive to caſt out them*; I mean the *ſins* of *Complexion*, and *particular* Nature. This is a *great* work, and will require *ſtrong Faith*, and *many Prayers*, and *much time*, and *great watchfulneſs*, and *invincible reſolution*: Imploy *theſe heartily*; and though thou now and then mayſt receive a foyl, yet give not off ſo, but riſe again in the ſtrength of God, implore *new* aid, and fortifie thy ſelf with *more* conſiderations, and *deeper* reſolves; and *then*

renew the *Combat* upon the *encouragement* of *Divine aſſiſtance*, and *Chriſts merits* and *interceſſion*, and the *promiſe* that ſin *ſhall not have dominion over us*, Rom. vi. 14.

Remember, that *this* is the *great* work, and the biggeſt *difficulty*; if this be not overcome, all our *other labour* hath been in *vain*, and will be *loſt*. If this *root* remain, it will ſtill bear *poyſonous* fruit, which will be *matter* for *temptation*, and occaſion of *continual falling*; and we ſhall be in danger of being reconciled again to our *old* ſins, and to *undo* all; and ſo *our latter end will be worſe then our beginning*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Or, at leaſt, though we ſtand at a ſtay, and ſatisfie our ſelves with *that*; yet though we are *contented*, our condition is not *ſafe*.

If we will endeavour to any pur-

poſe

pose of *duty*, or *security*, we must *proceed* still after our *lesser conquests*, till the *sins* of *complexion* are laid *dead* at our feet. He that is born of *God*, sinneth not, and he cannot sin, 1 *Joh.* iii. 9. Till we come to *this*, we are but *strugling* in the *birth*.

Such a *perfection* as is *mortifying* of *vitious temper*, is *I* hope *attainable*, and 'tis no doubt that which *Religion* aims at; and though it be a *difficult height*, yet we must not sit down this side: At least we must be always pressing on to this Mark: if Providence *cut* off our days before we have arrived to it, we may expect acceptance of the *sincerity* of our endeavours, upon the account of the *merits* of our Saviour: For he hath procured favour for those *sincere* Believers, and Endeavourers, whose Day is done, before their

Work is compleated; *this I* mean, of ſubduing the *darling* ſins of their *particular Natures.*

But then if we *reſt*, and pleaſe our ſelves with the *little Victories* and attainments, and let theſe our *great enemies* quietly alone, 'tis an argument our *endeavours* are not *ſincere*, but much ſhort of that *ſtriving*, which will procure an *entrance* into the *ſtraight gate.* The next thing (and 'tis the laſt *I* ſhall mention) which is implyed in *ſtriving*, is,

(IV) *To furniſh our ſelves, through Divine Grace with the habits and inclinations of Holineſs and Vertue.* For *Goodneſs* to become a kind of *Nature* to the Soul, is *height* indeed; but ſuch a one as *may* be reacht: the new Nature, and new Creature, *Gal.* vi. 15. are not meer Names.

We

We have observ'd that some men are of a *Natural Generosity, Veracity* and *Sweetness*; and they *cannot* act contrary to these *Native* Vertues without a mighty *Violence*: why now should not the *New Nature* be as *powerful* as the *Old*? And why may not the *Spirit of God*, working by an active faith and endeavour, fix *habits* and *inclinations* on the Soul, as prevalent as *those*? No doubt, it *may*, and *doth*, upon the Diviner Souls: For whom to do a *wicked*, or *unworthy action*, 'twould be as *violent*, and *unnatural*, as for the *meek* and *compassionate* temper to *butcher* the *innocent*; or for him, that is *naturally just*, to *oppress* and make a *prey* of the *fatherless* and the *widow*. I say, such a *degree* of *perfection* as this, should be aim'd at, *Heb.* vi. 1. and we should not sit down, and slacken

our endeavours on *this* ſide it.

In order to our aiming to the *happy* pitch, we are to uſe frequent *meditation* on the *excellency* and *pleaſure* of Vertue and Religion; and *earneſt prayer* for the *Grace* of God; and *diligent attendance* upon the *publique worſhip*; and *pious* company and converſes: For this great *deſign*, theſe helps are requiſite, and if we exerciſe our ſelves in them, as we ought, they will *fire* our Souls with the *love* of God, and Goodneſs; and ſo at laſt, *all* Chriſtian *Vertues* will become as *natural* to us, as *ſin* was before. And to *one*, that is ſo *prepared*, the *Gate* of *Happineſs* will be *open*, and of *eaſie* entrance; the *difficulties* are *overcome*, and from henceforth the *way* is *pleaſant* and plain before him, *Prov.* iii. 17.

Thus

Thus *I* have ſhewn you, that the *formidable difficulties may* be *overcome*, and I have told you *How* : 'tis a *plain courſe* I have *directed*, that will not puzzle your *underſtandings* with *needleſs niceties*, nor *diſtract* your *memories* with *multitudes*. Walk in this way, and do it *conſtantly*, with *vigour* and *alacrity* ; and there is no fear, but in the *ſtrength* of God, through the *merits* and *mediation* of his Son, you will *overcome*, and at laſt, *enter*.

Sect. IV.

I Had now done with this *general* Head, but that 'tis neceſſary to note three things here.

(1.) Thoſe *Inſtruments* of our happineſs which we muſt uſe in *ſtriving*, viz. **Faith, Prayer,** and **active**

active Endeavour, *must all of them be employed.* Not any *one* ſingly, will do the great work; nor can the *others*, if *any one*, be wanting. If we *believe*, and do *not pray*; or *pray*, and *do not endeavour*; or *endeavour*, without *thoſe*, the *Difficulties* will remain, and 'twill be impoſſible for us to *enter.*

(2.) *We muſt be diligent in our courſe*: If we do not exerciſe *Faith vigorouſly*, and *pray heartily*, and *endeavour with our whole might*, the means will not ſucceed; and 'tis as good not at all, as not to purpoſe. The Difficulties will not be overcome by *cold Faith*, or *ſleepy Prayers*, or *remiſs Endeavours*: A very *intenſe degree* of theſe is *neceſſary.*

(3.) *Our ſtriving muſt be conſtant*; we muſt not *begin*, and *look back*, *Heb.* x 38. or *run* a while, and *ſtop* in

in *midd* courſe, 1 *Cor.* ix. 24. and content our ſelves with *ſome* attainments, and think we have *arrived*, *Phil.* iii. 14. If we do ſo, we ſhall find our ſelves dangerouſly miſtaken. The *Crown* is at the *end* of the *Warfare*, and the *Priſe* at the *end* of the *Race*. If we will ſucceed, we muſt hold on: *The life of one that ſtrives, as he ought, muſt be a continual motion forwards*; always *proceeding*, always *growing*.

If we *ſtrive thus*, we cannot *fail*; if any of *theſe qualifications* be wanting, we *cannot but* miſcarry. And hence no doubt it is, that many that *ſeek* to *enter*, *ſhall not be able*, and the preſumed ſons of the Kingdom are ſhut out, *Mat.* viii. 12. They *ſeek*, and are very deſirous to be admitted; They do *ſome* thing, and *ſtrive*; but their *ſtriving* is *partial*,

or

or *careleſs*, or *ſhort*; by reaſon of which defects, they *do* not *overcome*, and *ſhall* not *enter*.

This is a *dangerous* Rock, and perhaps there are as many undone by *cold*, and *half ſtriving*, as by not *ſtriving at all*. He that hath done *ſome* thing, *preſumes* he is *ſecure*; He goes the round of ordinary Duties, but advanceth nothing in his way; He *overcometh* none of the great *Difficulties*, none of the *Habits*, or *Natural Inclinations*; He is contented with *other* things that make a more *glorious ſhew*; though they *ſignifie leſs*; and perhaps deſpiſeth *theſe*, under the notion of *Morality*; and ſo preſuming, that he is a *Saint*, *too ſoon*, he never comes to be *one at all*: ſuch are the *ſeekers that ſhall not be able to enter*: Their *ſeeking* imports *ſome ſtriving*; but

'tis

'tis *ſuch*, as, though it be *ſpecious*, yet it is *imperfect*, and will not ſucceed. And hence the *THIRD Propoſition* ariſeth, that I propoſed to diſcourſe.

CHAP.

Chap. III.

THE *danger of miſtaking in the* Marks & Meaſures *of* Godlineſs. *Inſtances of the meer* **Animal Religion**; *how* far *it may* go, *in* Faith, *in* Prayer, *and in* Endeavour; *diſcourſed in ſeveral Particulars; and therein the whole* myſtery *of the* Modern Phariſaick Godlineſs *is diſcovered, and ſhewn to be* ſhort *and* inſufficient. Objections *againſt the ſeverity of the Diſcourſe, anſwered.*

Sect.

Sect. I.

(III.) **That there is a ſort of ſtriving that will not procure an entrance:** implyed in theſe words, *For many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.*

'Tis a dangerous thing to be flattered into a *falſe peace*; and to take up with *imperfect Godlineſs*; to reconcile the *hopes* of *Heaven* to our *beloved ſins*, and to judge our conditions *ſafe* upon *inſufficient grounds*. *This* multitudes *do*, and 'tis the great danger of our days; Men cannot be *contented* without doing *ſomething* in Religion; but they are *contented with a little*. And then they reckon themſelves *godly*, before they are *vertuous*; and take themſelves to be *Saints*, upon ſuch things as will not

not distinguish a *good man* from a *bad.*

We seek after *Marks* of *Godliness*, and would be glad to know, *how* we might try our state: The thing is of great importance; and if the *Signs* we judge by are either *false*, or *imperfect*, we are deceived to our undoing. Meer *Speculative* mistakes about Opinions, do no great hurt; but errour in the *Marks* and *Measures* of *Religion*, is deadly. Now there are sundry things commonly taken for *signs* of *Godliness*, which though they are *something*, yet they are not *enough*; They are *hopeful* for *beginnings*, but nothing worth when they are our *end*, and *rest*. They are a kind of *seeking*, and *imperfect striving*; but not *such* as *overcometh* the *difficulties* of the way, or will procure us an *entrance* at the

Gate.

Gate. Therefore to diſable the *flattering, inſufficient marks* of *Godlineſs*, I ſhall diſcover in purſuance of the *Third Propoſition*, *How far a man may ſtrive in the exerciſes of Religion, and yet be found at laſt among thoſe ſeekers that ſhall not be able to enter.* And though I have intimated ſomething of this in the general before, yet I ſhall now more particularly ſhew it in the *Inſtances* that follow. And in *theſe* I ſhall diſcover a **Religion** that may be called **Animal**, to which the *Natural* man may attain.

Sect. II.

(1.) A *Man may believe the Truths of the Goſpel, and aſſent heartily to all the Articles of the Creed*: and if he *proceeds* not, he is no further

by *this*, than the *faith* of *Devils*, Jam. ii. 19.

(2.) He may go on, *and have a great thirst to be more acquainted with Truth*; He may seek it diligently in *Scripture*, and *Sermons*, and *good Books*, and *knowing Company*; And yet *do this*, by the *motion* of no *higher principle*, than an *inbred* curiosity, and *desire* of *knowledge*; and many times this *earnestness* after *Truth*, proceeds from a *proud affectation* to be wiser than our Neighbours, that we may *pity* their *darkness*; or the itch of a *disputing* humour, that we may out talk them; or a design to carry on, or make a party, that we may be called *Rabbi*, or serve an Interest: And the *zeal* for *Truth* that is set on work by such motives, is a *spark* of that *fire* that is from *beneath*: 'Tis *dangerous*

to

to a *mans ſelf*, and to the *publick weal* of the *Church*, and *mankind*. But the man proceeds, and is

(3.) *Very much concern'd to defend, and propagate his Faith*; and the Phariſees were ſo in relation to theirs, *Mat.* xxiii. 15. and *ſo* have been many Profeſſors of *all* the Religions that are, or ever were. Men *naturally* love their *own* Tenents, and are ambitious to mould *others judgments* according to *theirs*. There is *glory* in being an *inſtructer* of other men; and turning them to *our ways*, and *opinions*: ſo that here is nothing yet *above* Nature; nothing but what may be found in *many* that *ſeek*, and are *ſhut out*. But,

(4.) *Faith* works greater effects than *theſe*, and *Men offer themſelves to Martyrdom for it*; *This*, one would

think, ſhould be the *greateſt* height, and an argument that *all* the *difficulties* of the way, are *overcome* by one that is *ſo reſolved*; and that the *Gate* cannot but be *opened* to him. And ſo, no doubt, *it is*, *when all things elſe are ſutable*: But otherwiſe *theſe* conſequences by no means follow. St. *Paul* ſuppoſeth that a man may give his *body to be burned*, and not have *Charity*, without which his *Martyrdom* will not profit, 1 *Cor.* xiii. For one to *deny* his Religion, or what he believes to be *certain*, and of *greateſt conſequence*, is *diſhonourable* and *baſe*: and *ſome* out of principles of meer *natural bravery*, will *die* rather than they will do it; and yet, upon other accounts, be far enough from being *heroically virtuous*. Beſides, the deſire of the *glory* of *Martyrdom*, and *Saintſhip* after

after it, may in *some* be *stronger* than the *terrors* of *Death*: and we see frequently, that men will sacrifice their *lives* to their *honour* and reputation; yea to the most contemptible *shaddows* of it. And there is no *passion* in us so *weak*, no *lust* so *impotent*, but hath, in many instances, prevail'd over the *fear of dying*. *Every* Appetite hath had its *Martyrs*; and all *Religions theirs*; and though a man give his body to be burnt for the *best*, and have not *Charity*, viz. *Prevalent love to God and Men*, it will not signifie: So that *Martyrdom* is no *infallible mark*, nor will it avail any thing, except *sincere endeavour* to *overcome* the greater *difficulties*, have gone before it. Thus far *Faith* may go without effect: and yet one step further,

(5.) *Men may confidently rely upon Christ for salvation, and be firmly perswaded that he hath justified, and will make them happy.* They may *appropriate* him to themselves, and be pleased mightily in the opinion of his being *theirs.* And yet notwithstanding this confidence, may be in the number of those *seekers* that shall not *enter.* For Christ is the Author of *eternal life* only *to those that obey him,* Heb. v. 9. and to *obey* him, is to *strive vigorously,* and *constantly,* to *overcome* all our *sinful inclinations* and *habits.* And those that *trust* he will save them, though they have never seriously set about *this work,* deceive themselves by vain presumption, and in effect say, that he will dissolve or dispense with his Laws in their favour. For he requires us to *deny our selves,*

Mar.

Mar. viii. 34. *To mortifie the body*, Rom. viii. 13. *To love enemies*, Mat. v. 44. *To be Meek*, Mat. xi. 29. *and Patient*, Jam. v. 8. *and Humble*, 1 Pet. v. 7. *and Juſt*, Mat. vii. 12. *and Charitable*, Heb. xiii. 16. *and Holy as he that called us is holy*, 1 Pet. i. 15. And he hath promiſed to ſave upon no other terms; For all *theſe* are included in *Faith*, when 'tis taken in the *juſtifying* ſenſe; and *this* is the *way* of *Happineſs*: If we walk not in *this*, but in the paths of our own chooſing, our *relying upon Chriſt* is a *mockery*, and will deceive us.

We *may* indeed be *confident*, and we *ought*, that he will *ſave* all thoſe that *ſo believe* as to *obey* him; but may not truſt that he will ſave us except we are ſome of thoſe. To *rely upon Chriſt for our ſalvation*, *muſt*

follow our ſincere and obedient ſtriving, and not go before it. The miſtake of this is exceeding dangerous, and I doubt hath been fatal to many. The ſum is, To *rely on Chriſt* without a *reſolute* and *ſteady* endeavour to overcome every ſin and temptation, will gain us nothing in the end but ſhame and diſappointment: *For 'tis not every one that ſaith unto him, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into heaven, but he that doth the will of his Father which is in heaven,* Mat. vii. 21. The fooliſh Virgins relyed upon him, and expected he ſhould open to them; *Lord, Lord, open to us,* Mat. xxv. 11. but he kept them out, and would not *know* them, *v.* 11.

Thus of the *Firſt* imperfect *Mark* of *Godlineſs*; *A man may upon the account of meer Nature, arrive to all*

the

the mentioned degrees of Faith; and yet if his endeavours in the practice of Christian virtues be not ſutable, he will certainly come ſhort at laſt.

Sect. III.

(II.) A Man may be very *devout*, and given much to *Prayer*, be very *frequent* and *earneſt* in *it*; may have the *gift* of *expreſſing* himſelf *fluently*, without the help of *Form* or *Meditation*: yea he may be ſo *intent* and taken up in theſe exerciſes, that he may as it were be raviſh't out of himſelf by the *fervours* of his *ſpirit*; ſo that he really kindles very *high affections* as well in others, as in himſelf: And yet if he *reſts* in *this*, and ſuch like things, as *Religion*, and reckons that he is accepted of God for it; if he allow

allow himself in any *unmortified* lusts, and think to *compound* for them by his *Prayers*, he is *an evil man* notwithstanding, and one of those *seekers* that shall *not be able to enter.* The *Pharisees*, we know, were *much given* to *Prayer*: They were *long* in those *devotions*, and very *earnest in them*, often repeating the same expressions, out of vehemence. *Ignatius Loyola*, founder of the Jesuites, was a man almost *ecstatical* in his *Prayers*; and *Hacket* the Blasphemer, executed in the days of Queen *Elizabeth*, was a person of *Seraphical Devotion*, and would *pray* those that heard him even into *transports*. *Basilides* the cruel Duke of *Mosco*, is said to have his hands almost continually lifted up in Prayer, except when they were imployed in some barbarous and bloody

bloody Execution: And we have *known* and *felt* one not much unlike him. There are infinite inſtances in our dayes of this *dangerous* ſort of *evil men*.

And we may learn hence, that the greateſt gift of *Prayer*, and *earneſtneſs* and *frequency* in it, is no good *mark* of *Godlineſs*, except it be attended with *ſincere*, *conſtant* and *virtuous* endeavours.

For ſome men have a *natural ſpice* of *Devotion* in a *Religious Melancholy*, which is their temper; and *ſuch* have commonly *ſtrong Imaginations*, and *zealous affections*, which when they are heated, *flame forth* into great *heights*, and *expreſſions* of *devotion*: The *warm phancy* furniſheth *words* and *matter* readily and unexpectedly, which many times begets in the man a conceit that he

is

is *inſpired*, and that his *Prayers* are the *breathings* of the *Holy Ghoſt*; or at leaſt, that he is *extraordinarily* aſſiſted by *it*; which belief kindles his affections yet *more*, and he is carried beyond himſelf, even into the *third heavens*, and *ſuburbs* of *glory*, as he fancies, and *ſo* he makes no doubt, but that he is a *Saint* of the *firſt* rank, and ſpecial favorite of Heaven; when all this while, he may be really a *bad* man full of *Envy*, and *Malice*; *Pride*, and *Covetouſneſs*; *Scorn*, and *ill Nature*; *contempt of his Betters*, and *diſobedience to his Governors*. And while it is *ſo*, notwithſtanding thoſe *glorious* things, he is no further than the *Phariſee*. *Hearty* and *humble deſire*, though *imperfectly* expreſt, and without this *pomp*, and thoſe *wonders*, is far more acceptable to God, who de-

delights not in the *exercises* of *meer Nature*, Psal. cxlvii. 10. but is well pleased with the expressions of *Grace* in those that fear him.

So that a *sincere* and *lowly-minded* Christian that talks of no *immediate* incomes, or *communications*; and perhaps durst not, out of *reverence*, trust to his own present conceptions in a work so *solemn*, but useth the help of some *pious form* of words suitable to his *desires* and *wants*, who is duly *sensible* of his *sins*, and the *necessity* of *overcoming* them; and is *truly* and *earnestly* desirous of the Divine *aids*, in order to it: such a one as *this* Prays by the Spirit, and will be assisted by it; while the *other* doth all by *meer Nature* and *imitation*, and shall not have those *spiritual* aids which he never *heartily desires*, nor *intends* to *use*.

This,

This, I think, I may *truly* and *ſafely* ſay: But for the Controverſie between *Forms* and *Conceived Prayers*, which of them is *abſolutely beſt*, I determine nothing of it here. And indeed, I ſuppoſe that in their own nature, they are alike indifferent, and are more or leſs accepted, as they partake more or leſs of the *Spirit* of *Prayer*, viz. of *Faith*, *Humility*, and *holy deſire* of the good thing we pray for; and a man may *have theſe* that prays by a *Form*; and he may *want* them that takes the *other* way, and thinks himſelf in a diſpenſation much above it. So that my buſineſs is not to ſet up one of theſe ways of Devotion againſt the other; but to ſhew, that the *heights* and *vehemencies* of many *warm* people in their *unpremeditated* Prayers, have nothing in them *ſupernatural* or *Divine*, and con-

conſequently, of themſelves, they are no *marks* of *Godlineſs*: which I hope no one thinks I ſpeak to diſcredit thoſe *pious* ardours that are felt by *really devout* ſouls, when a *vigorous* ſenſe of God, and Divine things, doth even ſometimes tranſport them: Far be it from me to deſign any thing ſo *impious*; My aim is only to note, that there are *complexional heats* raiſed, many times by *fancy* and *ſelf-admiration*, that look like *theſe*, in perſons who really have little of God in them; and we ſhould take care that we are not deceived by them. *Thus far* alſo thoſe may go that notwithſtanding *ſhall not enter*. I add,

SECT.

Sect. IV.

(III.) *A Man may endeavour some things likewise, and so strive in the last sense; and yet for want of some of the mentioned Qualifications, his work may miscarry, and himself with it.*

(1.) There is no doubt, but that an evil man may be *convinced* of his *sin* and *vileness*, and that even to *anguish* and *torment*. The *Gentiles*, saith the Apostle, Rom. ii. 14. *which have not the Law, shew the works of the Law written in their hearts, their thoughts in the mean time accusing, or excusing one another.* Conscience often stings and disquiets the vilest sinners; and sometimes extorts from them *lamentable confessions* of their sins, and *earnest declamations* against

againſt them. They may *weep bitterly* at their remembrance, and be under great heavineſs, and dejection upon their occaſion. They may *ſpeak vehemently* againſt ſin themſelves, and love to have others to handle it ſeverely. All this bad men may do upon the ſcore of *natural fear*, and *ſelf love*, and the *apprehenſion* of *a future Judgment*. And now ſuch *convictions* will *naturally* beget ſome *endeavours*: A *convinced underſtanding* will have ſome influence upon the *will* and *affections*. The *mind* in the *unregenerate*, may luſt againſt the *fleſh*, as *that* doth againſt *it*.

So that (2.) ſuch a meer *animal man* may *promiſe*, and *purpoſe*, and *endeavour* in ſome pretty conſiderable meaſure; but then, he goes not on with *full* reſolution, but *wavers*, and *ſtops*, and *turns about* again;

and lets the *law* of the *members*, that of *death* and *ſin*, to prevail over him. His *endeavour* is *remiſs*, and conſequently *ineffectual*; it makes no *conqueſts*, and will not *ſignifie*. He *ſins on*, though with *ſome regret*; and his very *unwillingneſs* to ſin, while he commits it, is ſo far from *leſſening*, that it *aggravates* his *fault*: It argues that he ſins againſt *conſcience*, and *conviction*; and that *ſin* is ſtrong and reigns

'Tis true indeed St. *Paul*, Rom. 7. makes ſuch a deſcription ſeemingly of *himſelf*, as one might think concluded him under this ſtate; He ſaith, verſ. 8. *That ſin wrought in him all manner of concupiſcence*: verſ. 9. *That ſin revived, and he died*: verſ. 14. *That he was carnal*; and again, *ſold under ſin*, verſ. 20. *That ſin dwelt in him, and wrought that which*

he

he would not: verſ. 23. *That the law of his Members led him into captivity to the law of ſin*: and verſ. 25. *That he obeyed the law of ſin.*

If this be *ſo*, and St. *Paul*, a *regenerate man*, was in *this* ſtate, it will follow, that *ſeeking* and *feeble endeavour*, that overcometh no difficulty, may yet *procure* an *entrance*; and he that is come hitherto, *viz.* to *endeavour*, is *ſafe* enough though he do not conquer.

This Objection preſſeth not only againſt *this head*, but againſt my whole Diſcourſe, and the Text it ſelf. Therefore to anſwer it, I ſay, That the Apoſtle here is not to be underſtood of *himſelf*, but he deſcribes the *ſtate* of an *unregenerate man*, though he ſpeaks in the firſt perſon, a *Figure* that was ordinary with *this* Apoſtle, and *frequent*

enough in common ſpeech: Thus we ſay, *I am thus*, and *thus*, and *did ſo*, and *ſo*, when we are deſcribing a ſtate, or actions in which perhaps we in perſon are not concerned.

In this ſenſe the beſt Expoſitors underſtand theſe expreſſions, and thoſe excellent Divines of our own, Biſhop *Taylor*, and Dr. *Hammond*, and others have noted to us, That this *deſcription* is directly contrary to all the *Characters* of a *regenerate man*, given elſewhere by *this*, and the other Apoſtles. As he is ſaid to be *dead to ſin*, Rom. vi. 11. *Free from ſin*, and the *ſervant of Righteouſneſs*, Rom vi. 18. That *he walks not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 1. *That the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made him free from the law of ſin and death*, Rom. viii. 2.

viii. 2. *That he overcometh the world,* Joh. 5. 4. *He ſinneth not,* 1 Joh iii. 6. *He hath crucified the fleſh with its affections and luſts,* Gal. v. 24. Which *Characters* of a *truly regenerate* perſon, if they be compared with thoſe above-cited out of *Rom.* vii. it will appear, that they are as contrary, as 'tis poſſible to ſpeak; and by this, 'tis evident that they deſcribe the *two contrary ſtates.*

For can the *regenerate* be *full* of all *manner* of *concupiſcence,* and at the ſame time be *crucified to the fleſh,* and *ill affections and luſts? one,* in whom *ſin revives while he dies;* and yet *one* that is *dead to ſin? carnal,* and yet *not walking after the fleſh, but after the Spirit? ſold under ſin,* and yet *free from ſin? Having ſin dwelling in him; and a captive to ſin; and obeying the law of ſin;* and yet

free from the law of ſin and death? How can theſe things conſiſt? To tell us, *'Tis ſo*, and *'tis not ſo*, and to twiſt ſuch *contradictions* into *Orthodox Paradoxes*, are pretty things to pleaſe *Fools* and *Children*; but the *wiſer* ſort care not for *ſuch riddles*, as are *not ſenſe*.

I think 'tis evident enough then, that the Apoſtle in that miſtaken Chapter, relates the *feeble, impotent condition* of *one* that was *convinced* and *ſtrove a little*, but not to *purpoſe*. And if we find our ſelves compriſed by that *deſcription*, though we may be never ſo ſenſible of the *evil* and *danger* of a *ſinful courſe*, and may *endeavour* ſome ſmall matter, but without *ſucceſs*; we are yet under *that evil*, and *obnoxious* to *that danger*: For he that *ſtrives* in *earneſt*, *conquers at laſt*, and *advanceth ſtill*, though

though all the *work* be not *done at once*. So that if we *endeavour* and *gain* nothing, our endeavour is *peccant*, and wants *Faith* or *Prayer* for *Divine aids*, or *constancy*, or *vigor*; and so, *Though we may seek, we shall not be able to enter.*

But (3.) An *Imperfect striver* may *overcome* sin in *some* Instances, and yet in *that* do no great matter neither, if he *lies down* and goes no *further*: There are *some* sins we outgrow by *age*, or are indisposed to them by *bodily infirmity*, or diverted by *occasions*, and it may be by *other* sins; and *some* are contrary to *worldly Interests*, to our *credit*, or *health*, or *profit*; and when we have been in any great degree prejudiced by *them* in *these*, we fall out with *those* sins, and *cease* from them, and so by *resolution* and *disuse*, we master

them at last fully: which, if we went on, and attempted upon all the rest, were something: But when we stop short in these *petty* victories, our *general state* is not *altered*; He that conquers *some* evil appetites, is yet a slave to *others*; and though he hath *prevailed* over *some difficulties*, yet the *main ones* are yet behind.

Thus the *imperfect striver* masters, it may be, his beastly appetite to *intemperate* drinking, but is yet under the power of *love* of *Riches*, and *vain pleasure*. He ceaseth from open *debauchery*, but entertains *spiritual wickedness* in his heart: He will not *Swear*, but will *backbite* and *rail*: He will not be *Drunk*, but will *damn* a man for not being of *his opinion*: He will not *prophane* the *Sabbath*, but will *defraud* his Neighbour. Now

Now theſe *half* conqueſts, when we *reſt* in *them*, are as good as *none* at all. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have regard to all thy Commandments*, ſaith the Kingly Prophet, *Pſal.* cxix. 6. 'Tis *ſhameful* to give off, when our work is but *half* done; *what* we *do*, caſts the greater reproach upon us for what we omit. To *ceaſe to be prophane*, is ſomething as a *paſſage*, but nothing for *an end*. We are not *Saints* as ſoon as we are *civil*. 'Tis not only *groſs ſins* that are to be *overcome*. The *wages of ſin is death*, not only of the *great* and *capital*, but of the *ſmalleſt*, if they are indulged. The *Phariſee* applauded himſelf, that he was not like the *Extortioners*, *Adulterers*, and *unjuſt*, nor like the *Publican*, that came to pray with him, *Luk.* xviii. 11. and yet he went away never

never the more *justified*. The *unwise Virgins* were no *profligate livers*, and yet they were *shut out*.

He that will enter, must strive against *every* corrupt appetite and inclination. A *less* leak will sink a Ship, as well as a *greater*, if no care be taken of it. A *Consumption* will *kill*, as well as the *Plague*; yea sometimes the *less* Disease may in the event prove more deadly, than the *greater*; for small distempers may be neglected, till they become *incurable*; when as the *great* ones awaken us to speedy care for a remedy. A *small* hurt in the finger *slighted*, may prove a *gangreen*, when a *great wound* in the *head*, by seasonable applications is *cured*.

'Tis unsafe then to content our selves with *this*, that our sins are not *foul* and *great*; *those* we account *little*

tle ones may prove as *fatal*, yea they are ſometimes more *dangerous*: For we are apt to think them *none at all*, or *Venial infirmities* that may conſiſt with *a ſtate of grace*, and Divine favour; we *excuſe* and make Apologies for them, and fancy that *Hearing*, and *Prayer*, and *Confeſſion* are atonements enough for *theſe*. Upon which accounts I am apt to believe, that the leſs notorious Vices have ruined as many as the greateſt Abominations. Hell doth not conſiſt only of *Drunkards*, and *Swearers*, and *Sabbath-breakers*: No, the *demure Phariſee*, the *plauſible Hypocrite*, and *formal Profeſſor*, have their place alſo in *that lake* of fire. The *great* impieties do often *ſtartle* and *awaken* conſcience, and beget ſtrong convictions, and ſo ſometimes excite reſo-

reſolution, and vigorous ſtriving; while men hug themſelves in their *leſſer ſins*, and carry them unrepented to their graves.

The ſum is, We may *overcome ſome ſins*, and turn from the *groſſer ſort* of *wickedneſs*, and yet if we endeavour not to ſubdue the *reſt*, we are ſtill in the condition of *unregeneracy* and *death*, and though we *thus ſeek*, we ſhall not *enter*.

(4.) *A Man may perform many duties of Religion, and that with reliſh and delight, and yet miſcarry.* As,

(1.) He may be *earneſt* and *ſwift* to *hear*, and follow Sermons conſtantly from one place to another, and be exceedingly pleaſed and affected with the Word, and yet be an *evil Man*, and in a *bad ſtate*. *Herod heard John Baptiſt gladly*,

Mark

Mark vi. 20. and he that received the ſeed into ſtony places, received it *joyfully*, Mat. xiii. 20. *Zeal* for *hearing* doth not always ariſe from a *conſcientious* deſire to learn, in order to *practiſe*, but ſometimes it proceeds from an itch after *novelty* and *notions*, or an ambition to be *famed* for *Godlineſs*; or the *importunity* of natural *conſcience*, that will not be ſatisfied except we *do ſomething*; or a deſire to get matter to *feed* our *opinions*, or to furniſh us with *pious* diſcourſe; I ſay, *earneſtneſs* to *hear* ariſeth very often from ſome of theſe; and when it doth *ſo*, we gain but *little by it*: yea, we are dangerouſly tempted to take this for an *infallible token* of our *Saintſhip*, and ſo to content our ſelves with this *Religion* of the *ear*, and to diſturb every body with the a-

bun-

bundance of our *diſputes* and *talk*, while we neglect our own *ſpirits*, and let our *unmortified affections* and *inclinations* reſt in quiet, under the ſhadow of theſe *ſpecious* ſervices.

So that when a great *affection* to *hearing* ſeiſeth upon an *evil man*, 'tis odds but it doth him *hurt*; It puffs him up in the *conceit* of his *Godlineſs*, and makes him *pragmatical*, *troubleſome*, and *cenſorious*; He turns his *food* into *poyſon*: *Among bad men, thoſe are certainly the worſt, that have an opinion of their being godly*; and ſuch are thoſe that have *itching ears*, under the power of *vitious habits* and *inclinations*. An *earneſt* diligent hearer then, may be one of thoſe who *ſeeks*, and is *ſhut out*. And ſo may

(2.) He that *Faſts* much, and *ſeverely*: The *Jews* were exceedingly

ly given to *faſting*, and they were very ſevere in it. They abſtained from all things pleaſant to them, and put on *ſackcloth*, and *ſowre looks*, and *mourned bitterly*, and *hung down* the head, and *ſate* in *aſhes*; ſo that one might have taken theſe for very *holy*, *penitent*, *mortified people*, that had a great *antipathy* againſt their *ſins*, and *abhorrence* of *themſelves* for them: And yet God complains of theſe *ſtrict*, *ſevere Faſters*, Zach. vii. 5. *That they did not Faſt unto him*; but faſted for *ſtrife* and *debate*, Iſa. lviii. 4. Their *Faſts* were not *ſuch as he had choſen, to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burden; and to let the oppreſſed free*, verſ. 6. But they continued, notwithſtanding their *Faſts*, and Gods admonitions by his Prophets, to *oppreſs the widow, and fatherleſs, and poor*, Zach. vii. 10.

Thus

Thus meer *natural* and evil men ſometimes put on the garb of *Mortification*, and exerciſe *rigors* upon their *bodies*, and external perſons, in exchange for the *indulgences* they allow their beloved *appetites*; and while the ſtrict Diſcipline reacheth no further, though we *keep days*, and *faſt* often, yet this will not put us beyond the condition of the *Phariſee*, who *faſted twice in the week*, as himſelf boaſted, *Luke* xviii. 12. And,

(3.) *An imperfect ſtriver may be very much given to pious and religious diſcourſes*: He may love to be talking of Divine things; eſpecially of the *love* of *Chriſt* to *ſinners*, which he may frequently ſpeak of with much *earneſtneſs* and *affection*, and have that *dear name* always at his tongues end to *begin* and *cloſe* all his

his ſayings; and to *fill* up the *void* places, when he wants what to ſay next: and yet *this* may be a *bad* man, who never felt thoſe Divine things he talks of; and never *loved Chriſt* heartily, and as he ought.

'Twas obſerved before, that there are ſome who have a ſort of *Devoutneſs*, and *Religion* in their particular *Complexion*; and if ſuch are *talkative* (as many times they are) they will eaſily run into *ſuch* diſcourſes, as *agree* with their *temper*, and take pleaſure in them for *that* reaſon; and for *this* alſo, becauſe they are apt to gain us reverence, and the good opinion of thoſe with whom we converſe. And ſuch as are by nature diſpoſed for this faculty, may eaſily get it by *imitation* and remembrance of the *devout forms* they hear,

and read: ſo that there may be nothing *Divine* in *all this*; nothing, but what may conſiſt with *unmortified* luſts, and affections: And though ſuch talk earneſtly of the *love* of *Chriſt*, and expreſs a mighty love to his *name*, yet this may be too without any real conformity unto him in his *Life*, and *Laws*. The Jews ſpoke much of *Moſes*, in him they *believed*, and in him they *truſted*, *John* v. 45. His *name* was a *ſweet* ſound to their ears, and 'twas very *pleaſant* upon their *tongues*; and yet they *hated* the Spirit of *Moſes*, and had no love to thoſe Laws of his, which condemned their wicked actions And we may ſee how many of thoſe *love Chriſt*, that ſpeak often, and affectionately of him, by obſerving how they *keep his Commandments*, John xiv. 15. eſpecially

cially *those* of *meekness*, *mercy*, and *universal love.*

Thus *imperfect strivers* may imploy themselves in the *external offices* of *Religion*: I have instanced only in *Three*, the like may be said of the rest. And to this, I add, That they may not only exercise themselves in the *outward* matters of duty, but may arrive to some things that are accounted greater *heights*, and are *really* more, and *spiritual*, and *refined*. To instance.

Sect. V.

(1.) They may have *some love* to *God*, *Goodness*, and *good men*. The Soul naturally loves *beauty*, and *perfection*; and all mankind apprehend *God*, to be of all *Beings*, the most *beautiful*, and *perfect*, and

therefore muſt needs have an *intellectual love* for him: The reaſon that *that love* takes no hold of the *paſſions* in *wicked* men, is, partly becauſe they are *diverted* from the thoughts of Him, by the *objects* of *ſenſe*; but chiefly, becauſe they conſider him as their *enemy*, and therefore can have no *complacency*, or *delight* in him, who they think hath nothing but thoughts of *enmity*, and diſpleaſure againſt them. But if once they come to be perſwaded (as many times, by ſuch falſe marks, as I have recited, they *are*) that God is their *Father*, and peculiar *Friend*; that *they* are his *choſen*, and his *darlings*, whom he loved from *eternity*, and to whom he hath given his *Son*, and his *Spirit*, and will give *Himſelf*, in a way of the fulleſt enjoyment: Then, the *Love* that before

fore was only an *eſteem* in the *underſtanding*, doth *kindle* in the *affections* by the help of the conceit of *Gods loving them ſo dearly*, and the *paſſion* thus heated, runs out, even into *ſeraphick*, and *rapturous Devotions*; while yet all *this*, is but *meer animal love*, excited chiefly, by the *love* of *our ſelves*, not of the *Divine Perfections*. And it commonly goes no further, then to *earneſt* expreſſions of extraordinary love to God in our *Prayers*, and *Diſcourſes*, while it appears not in any *ſingular obedience* to his *Laws*, or *generous*, and *univerſal love* to mankind: which are the ways whereby the true *Divine Love* is expreſt; for, *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *John* v. 3. And as to the *other*, *thus*, *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us*,

and his love is perfected in us, 1 John iv. 12. And on the contrary, *If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a lyar*, John iv. 20. *Charity* then, and *univerſal obedience* are the *true* arguments, and expreſſions of our love to God; and *theſe* ſuppoſe a *victory* over corrupt *inclinations*, and *ſelf-will*. But the other love which ariſeth from the conceit of our *ſpecial dearneſs* to God upon *inſufficient* grounds; *that* goes no further then to ſome *ſuavities*, and *pleaſant fancies* within our ſelves; and ſome *paſſionate* complements of the *Image* we have ſet up in our imaginations. *This* Love will conſiſt with *Hatred*, and *contempt* of all that are not like our ſelves; yea and it will produce it: thoſe poiſonous fruits, and *vile* affections may be incouraged, and cheriſh'd under it.

So

So that there may be *ſome love to God* in *evil* men: But while ſelf-love is the *only motive*, and the more *prevalent* paſſion, it ſignifieth nothing to their advantage.

And as the *imperfect ſtriver* may have ſome *love* to *God*, ſo he *may* to *piety* and *vertue*: every man loves theſe in *Idea*. The vileſt ſinner takes part in his *affections* with the *vertuous* and *religious*, when he ſeeth them deſcribed in *Hiſtory* or *Romance*; and hath a deteſtation for *thoſe*, who are character'd as *impious* and *immoral*. *Vertue* is a great *Beauty*, and the mind is taken with it, while 'tis conſider'd at a diſtance; and our corrupt *intereſts*, and ſenſual *affections* are not concern'd. 'Tis *Theſe* that recommend *ſin* to our *love*, and *choice*, while the *mind* ſtands on the ſide of vertue: with *that* we

ſerve the Law of God, but *with the fleſh the law of ſin*, Rom. vii. 25. So that moſt *wicked* men, that are not degenerated into meer Brutes, have this *mental* and *intellectual* love to *goodneſs*: That is, they *approve*, and *like* it in their *minds*, and would *practiſe* it alſo, were it not for the *prevalent* biaſs of *fleſh* and *ſenſe*.

And hence it will follow likewiſe, That the *ſame* may *approve* and *reſpect good men*; They may reverence and love them for their *Charity*, *Humility*, *Juſtice*, and *Temperance*, though themſelves are perſons of the *contrary Character*; yet they may have a great and ardent affection for thoſe that are eminently *pious* and *devout*, though they are very *irreligious* themſelves. The *conſcience* of *vertue*, and of the *excellency* of *Religion*, may produce this

in

in the meer *natural* man, who is under the *dominion* of *vile inclinations*, and *affections*; and therefore *this* is no good *mark of godlineſs* neither. Our *love* to *God* and *goodneſs* will not ſtead us, except it be *prevalent*. And as the *love* deſcribed may be *natural*, and a *meer animal* man may arrive unto it: So,

(II.) He may to *an extraordinary zeal for the ſame things that are the objects of his love*. *Hot* tempers are *eager*, where they take either kindneſs or diſpleaſure. The natural man that hath an *animal love* to *Religion*, may be violent in ſpeaking, and acting for things appertaining to *it*. If his temper be *devotional* and paſſionate, he becomes a mighty *zealot*, and fills all places with the *fame* of his *godlineſs*: His *natural fire* moves this way, and makes a mighty *blaze*.

Ahab

Ahab was very *zealous*, and 'tis like 'twas not only his own intereſt that made him ſo, 2 *Kings* x. 16. The *Phariſees* were *zealous* people, and certainly their *zeal* was not always *perſonated*, and put on, but real: Though they were Hypocrites, yet they were *ſuch*, as, in many things, deceived *themſelves*, as well as *others*. They were *zealous* for their *Traditions*, and they believ'd 'twas their duty to be ſo. St. *Paul* while a *perſecutor*, was *zealous* againſt the *Diſciples*, and he thought he ought to do many things againſt that name. And our Saviour foretells, that thoſe *zealous murderers* that ſhould kill his *Saints*, ſhould think, *They did God good ſervice in it*, John xvi. 2. So that all the zeal of the natural man is not *feigning*, and acting of a part; nor hath it always *evil* objects.

jects. The Phariſees were zealous againſt the *wickedneſs* of the *Publicans*, and *Sinners*. *Zeal* then, and that in *earneſt* for Religion, may be in *bad* men. But then, this is to be noted, that 'tis commonly about *opinions*, or *external rites*, and *uſages*, and ſuch matters as appertain to *firſt* Table Duties, while uſually the ſame men are very *cold*, in reference to the *Duties* of the *Second*: And when zeal is *partial*, and ſpent about the little things that tend not to the overcoming the *difficulties* of our way, or the *perfecting* of *humane nature*, 'tis a meer *animal* fervour, and no *Divine* Fire. And the *natural* man, the *ſeeker* that *ſhall not enter*, may grow up to another height that looks *glorioufly*, and ſeems to ſpeak mighty things. As,

(III.) *He may have great comforts*

in

in religious meditations, and that even to rapturous exceſſes. He may take *theſe*, for *ſweet communion* with *God*, and the *joys* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and the *earneſt* of *Glory*, and be lifted up on high by them, and inabled to ſpeak in *wonderful raviſhing ſtrains*; and yet notwithſtanding be an *evil* man, and in the ſtate of ſuch as ſhall be *ſhut out.*

For this we may obſerve, That thoſe whoſe *complexion* inclines them to *devotion*, are commonly much under the power of *melancholy*; and they that are *ſo*, are moſtly very *various* in their tempers; ſometimes *merry*, and *pleaſant* to *exceſs*; and *then* plung'd as deep into the other extreme of *ſadneſs*, and *dejection*: one while the *ſweet humours* enliven the imagination, and preſent it with all things that are *pleaſant* and

agree-

agreeable. And *then*, the *black* blood ſucceeds, which begets clouds, and darkneſs, and fills the fancy with things *frightful*, and *uncomfortable*. And there are very few but feel ſuch varieties in a degree in themſelves. Now while the *ſweet blood* and *humours* prevail, the perſon whoſe complexion inclines him to Religion, and who hath arrived to the degrees newly diſcours'd of (though a meer *natural* man) is full of inward *delight*, and *ſatisfaction*; and fancies at this turn, that he is much in the *favour* of *God*, and a ſure *heir* of the *Kingdom* of Glory; which muſt needs excite in him many *luſcious*, and *pleaſant* thoughts: and *theſe* further warm his *imagination*, which, by *new*, and *taking* ſuggeſtions ſtill raiſeth the *affections more*; and ſo the man is as it were

tranſ-

transported beyond himself, and speaks like one *dropt* from the *clouds*: His tongue flows with *Light*, and *Glories*, and *Communion*, and *Revelations*, and *Incomes*; and then, believes that the *Holy Ghost* is the *Author* of all *this*, and that God is *in him of a truth*, in a special way of *Manifestation*, and *vouchsafement*. This is one of the greatest *Heights* of the *Animal Religion*, and many times it proceeds from nothing more *Divine*. For when *melancholick* vapours prevail again, the *imagination* is *overcast*, and the *fancy* possest by *dismal* and *uncomfortable* thoughts: and the man, whose head was but just before among the *Clouds*, is now groveling in the *Dust*. He thinks *all* is lost, and his condition miserable; He is a *cast-away*, and *undone*, when in the mean while as to Divine favour

vour he is just where he was before, or rather in a *better* state, since 'tis *better* to be humbled *with* reason, then to be lifted up *without it*. Such effects as *these* do meer *natural* passions and imaginations produce, when they are tinctured and heightned by *religious melancholy*. To *deny* ones *self*, and to *overcome ones passions*, and to *live* in a course of a *sober vertue*, is much more *Divine*, then *all this*.

'Tis *true* indeed, and I am far from denying it, that holy men feel those *joys* and *communications* of the *Divine Spirit* which are *no fancies*; and the Scripture calls them *great peace*, Ps. cxix. 165. and *joy in believing*, Rom. xv. 13. and the *peace of God that passeth all understanding*, Phil. iv. 7. But then, these *Divine vouchsafements* are not *rapturous*, or

ecstati-

ecstatical. They are no *sudden* flashes that are gone in a moment, leaving the soul in the regions of sorrow, and despair; but *sober lasting* comforts, that are the *rewards* and *results* of vertue; the *rejoycings* of a *good conscience*, 2 Cor. i. 12. and the *manifestations* of God to those rare souls, who have overcome the *evils* of their *natures*, and the *difficulties* of the *way*, or are *vigorously pressing* on towards this mark, *Phil.* iii. 14. But for such as have only the *forms* of godliness, I have mentioned, while the *evil inclinations* and *habits* are indulged, whatever they pretend, all the *sweets* they *talk* of, are but the *imagery* of *dreams*, and the *pleasant delusions* of their *fancies.*

SECT.

Sect. VI.

THus I have ſhewn how far the *meer Animal Religion* may go, in *imperfect ſtriving*. And now I muſt expect to hear

(1.) That this is very *ſevere*, *uncomfortable* Doctrine; and if one that ſhall eventually be *ſhut out*, may *do all this*, what ſhall become of the *generality* of *Religious* men that never do *ſo much*? And if *all this* be *ſhort*, what will be available? who then ſhall be ſaved?

To which I *Anſwer*, That we are not to make the *meaſures* of *Religion* and *Happineſs* our ſelves; but to take *thoſe* that Chriſt Jeſus hath *made* for us: And he hath told us, That *except our Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and*

Phariſees, we ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of heaven, Mat. v. 20. Now the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* did things in the way of *Religion*, that were equal to all the particulars I have mentioned; yea they went beyond many of our *glorious* Profeſſors, who yet think themſelves in an *high form* of *Godlineſs*. They *believed* their Religion *firmly*, and *Prayed frequently* and *fervently*, and *Faſted ſeverely*; They were *exact*, and exceeding *ſtrict* in the *obſervation* of their *Sabbaths*, and hated *ſcandalous* and *groſs* ſins; and were very *punctual* in all the duties of *outward Worſhip*; and in many things *ſupererrogated* and went beyond what was *commanded*: Such *zealous people* were *They*; and They *ſeparated* from the *converſations* and *cuſtoms* of *other Jews*, upon the account

count of their ſuppoſed *greater Holineſs* and *Purity*. *Theſe* were *heights* to which the *Phariſees* arrived; and a good Chriſtian muſt *exceed* all *this*: And he that lives in a *ſober courſe* of *Piety*, and *Vertue*; of *ſelf Government*, and humble *ſubmiſſion* to God; of *obedience* to his *Superiors*, and *Charity* to his *Neighbours*; He doth *really exceed* it, and ſhall *enter*, when the other ſhall be *ſhut out*. So that, when our Saviour ſaith, that the *Phariſaick* Righteouſneſs muſt be *exceeded*, the meaning is not, That a greater *degree* of every thing the *Phariſees* did, is *neceſſary*; but we muſt do *that* whith in the *nature* and *kind* of it is *better* and more acceptable to God, *viz*. That whereas they placed their Religion in *ſtrict Faſtings*, and nice obſervations of *Feſtivals*; in *lowd* and *earneſt Prayers*,

and *zeal* to get *Proselites*; we should place *ours*, in *sincere subjections* of our *wills* to the *will* of *God*; in *imitation* of the life of *Christ*, and *obedience* of his Laws; in *amending* the faults of our natures and lives; in *subduing* our *passions*, and casting out the *habits* of *evil*: *These* are much beyond the Religion of the *Phanatick Pharisee*; not in *shew* and *pomp*; but in *real* worth, and *divine* esteem. So that, upon the whole, we have no reason to be discouraged, because They that do *so much* are *cast out*; since, though we find not those *heats*, and *specious* things in our selves which we observe in *them*, yet if we are more *meek*, and *modest*, and *patient*, and *charitable*, and *humble*, and *just*, our case is *better*; and we have the *Power* of *Godliness*, when theirs is but the *Form*; And *we*, whom

They

They accounted *aliens* and *enemies*, ſhall *enter*; while *they*, the preſumed *friends* and *domeſticks*, ſhall be *ſhut out*.

But (2.) I expect it ſhould be again Objected againſt this ſeverity of Diſcourſe, That our Saviour ſaith, *Mat.* xi. 20. *That his yoke is eaſie and his burden is light*: which place ſeems to croſs all that hath been ſaid about the Difficulties of Religion. And 'tis true it hath ſuch an *appearance*, but 'tis *no more*: For the words look as *croſs* to the *expreſſions* of the ſame Divine Author, concerning the *ſtraightneſs* of the *Gate*, and *narrowneſs* of the *Way*, as to any thing I have delivered from thoſe *infallible ſayings*. Therefore to remove the *ſemblance* of *contrariety*, which the *objected Text* ſeems to have to thoſe *others*, and to my

Diſcourſe, we may obſerve,

That when our Saviour ſaith, that his *yoke* is *eaſie*, the word we read *eaſie* is χρηστὸς, which ſignifieth *very good*, *excellent*, *gracious*; and the meaning, I ſuppoſe is, That his Precepts had a *native beauty* and *goodneſs* in them; That they are *congruous* and *ſutable* to our reaſonable Natures, and *apt* inſtruments to make us *happy*; In which ſenſe, *this* expreſſion hath no *antipathy* to the *Text*, or to any thing I have ſaid. And whereas 'tis added, [*My Burden is light*] I think by this, we are to underſtand, That his *Commands* are not of that *burdenſome* nature, that the *Ceremonies* of the *Jewiſh* Law were: Thoſe were very cumberſome, and had nothing in their nature to make them *pleaſant* and *agreeable*; whereas his Religion had

no

no *expenſive*, *troubleſome* Rites appendant to it; nor did it require any thing but our obſervation of thoſe *Laws* which eternal *Reaſon* obligeth us to, and which of our ſelves we ſhould chooſe to live under, were we freed from the *intanglements* of the *World*, and *intereſts* of *Fleſh*. So that neither doth this *Objection* ſignifie any thing againſt the ſcope of my Diſcourſe.

Chap. IV.

INFERENCES from the *whole*, concerning, (1) *The true notion of a state of Grace and Nature.* (2) *The great design of Religion to perfect humane nature.* (3) *The agreement and oneness of Christianity and Morality.* (4) *The method of of Grace on the souls of men.* (5) *The nature of the Animal Religion.* (6) *The certain mark whereby to know*

know our state. (7) The power of Godliness, and the Forms of it.

Sect. I.

AND now I am at liberty to descend to the *Improvement* of what I have said; and the things I have to add will be comprehended under these two Generals (1) *Inferences*, and a plain (2) *Advice* in order to practice. I begin with the *Inferences* and *Corollaries* that arise from the whole discourse. And

(1) We may collect, **What is the state of Nature**; and **What the state of Grace.** We have seen that

that 'tis the *great* buſineſs of *Religion* to *overcome evil Inclinations*, and the prevailing *influence* of *ſenſe*, and *paſſion*, and evil *cuſtoms* and *example* and worldly *affections*; And therefore the *ſtate* of *Nature* conſiſts in the *power*, and *prevalency* of *Theſe*. *This* is that the Scripture calls the *Old man*, *Eph.* iv. 22. The *Image* of the *earthy*, 1 Cor. xv. *Fleſh*, Gal v. 17. *Death*, Rom. vii. 24. *Darkneſs*, John iii. 19. *and old leaven*, 1 Cor. v. 7. On the contrary, *The ſtate of Grace* is a ſtate of *ſincere ſtriving* againſt them; which if it keeps on, ends in *Victory*. And this is call'd *Converſion*, *Acts* iii. 19. and *Renovation*, while 'tis in its *firſt* motions; And the *Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. the *image* of the *heavenly*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. The *Spirit*, Gal. v. 16. *Light*, Epheſ. v. 8. and

8. and *Life*, 1 Joh. iii. 14. when 'tis arriv'd to more *compleatness*, and *perfection*.

For our fuller understanding this, we may consider, That grace is taken (1) for *Divine favour*; (2) for *Christian Vertue*. As it signifies *Divine favour*, so it is used,

(1) For those *helps* and *aids* God affords us, *viz.* the *Gospel*, Joh. i. 17. and the *influences* of *his Spirit*, 1 *Cor.* xii. 9. In this sense we are deliver'd from the *state* of *nature* by *Baptism*, *viz.* We are intitled to *divine helps*, which is a kind of *regeneration*; for we are born in a condition of *impotence*, and *weakness*, and *destitution* of *spiritual assistances*; This is the *world* of *meer nature*; But then in *Baptism*, we are brought into the *world* of *the spirit*, that is, are put under its *influences*, and

and are assured of its *aids*, and so are *morally born again*; Not that this *Regeneration* alone will *save* us, without our endeavours; it imports only an *external relation*, and right to *priviledges*, and by *these* we may be powerfully *assisted* in our *striving*, if we use them.

But then (2) *Grace* too, as it signifies *divine favour*, implies his *special* love, and kindness, such as he vouchsafes to holy, and vertuous men; so that we may observe that there may be a *distinction* between a *state* of *grace*, and a *state* of *salvation*. A state of *Grace* in the former sense, is a *condition assisted* by the *influences* of *Gods Spirit*, and all *baptized* persons are in *that*. But if they *use* not those *helps*, they are not in Gods *special* favour; and so not in a *state* of *Salvation*. But when those

those *assistances* are duly imployed, and join'd with our *sincere endeavour*, then the person so using them, is in a *state* of *Salvation* also; and in Gods special love and favour. Thus of the *state* of *Grace* in the *first* sense as taken for *divine favour*.

(2) The word is also used for *Christian Vertue*, 2 Peter iii. 18. and *vertue* is call'd *grace*, because 'tis wrought in us by the assistance of Gods *Spirit* and the *light* of the *Gospel*, which are *divine* favours; and to be in a *state* of *grace* in *this* sense, is to be a *virtuous* man, which supposeth *divine* aids, and intitles to *divine love*.

These things I have taken an occasion thus briefly to state; and I have done it, because there is oft-times much confusion in mens dis-

courses

courſes about *Grace*, and *Nature*, from which much trouble and many controverſies have ariſen. And by what I have ſaid alſo in theſe brief hints, the Doctrine of our Church in the office of *Baptiſm*, may be underſtood cleerly, and will appear to be very *ſound* and *true*, notwithſtanding the *petty* exceptions of thoſe, that underſtand not what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.

Sect. II.

(II) I may infer, **That the great deſign of Religion and the Goſpel is to perfect Humane nature.** The *perfection* of our *natures* conſiſts (as I have intimated) in the *ſubjection*, and *ſubordination* of the *affections* and

paſſions

paſſions to the *Mind*, as it is inlightned, and directed by the *divine Laws*, and thoſe of *Reaſon*. This is the ſtate of *integrity*, in which we were *firſt* made; and we loſt it, by the rebellion of our *ſenſes*, and inferiour powers, which have uſurpt the *government* of us ever ſince. Here is the *imperfection*, and *corruption* of our *natures*.

Now Religion deſigns to *remove* and *cure theſe*; and to reſtore us to our firſt, and happy ſtate. Its buſineſs is not to reform our looks, and our language; or to model our actions, and geſtures into a devout appearance; not only to reſtrain the practice of open prophaneneſs, and villany, nor to comfort us with the aſſurance of Gods loving us, we know not why: But to *cure* our *ill natures*, to *govern*

our

our *passions*, to *moderate* our *desires*, to throw out *pride* and *envy*, and all *uncharitable* surmisals, with the other *spiritual* sorts of wickedness; and thereby to make us *like* unto God, in whom there is no shadow of *sin*, or *imperfection*; and so to render us fit objects of his *delight*, and *love*.

So that whatever doth not tend to make us some way or other *really better*: *better* in our *selves*, and better in all *Relations*, as *fathers*, and *children*, and *husbands* and *wives*, and *subjects*, and *governours*, and *neighbours*, and *friends*, is not Religion; It may be a *form* of *Godliness*, but 'tis nothing to the *life*, and *power*. And where we see not *this effect* of Religion, let the professor of it be never so *high* and *glorious* in his profession, we may yet conclude

that

that either his *Religion* is not *good*, or that he only *pretends*, and *really* hath it not.

This I take to be a consideration of great moment and great certainty, *viz.* That Christian Religion aims at the *bettering* and *perfecting* of our *natures*. For the things it commands relate either to *worship*, or *vertue*. The instances of *external* worship are *prayer*, and *praise*; both which are high acts of *gratitude* and *justice*, and they *fit* us for divine blessings, and keep us under a *sense* of God, and prepare us for *union* with him, which is the *highest perfection* of which the creature is capable Thus the *outward* acts of *worship* tend to our happiness; and the *inward* do infinitely the *same*.

They are *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Fear*. *Faith* in God ſupports, and relieves us in all afflictions, and diſtreſſes. The *love* of him is a *pleaſure* and *ſolace* to us in all loſſes and diſappointments, ſince he is an object moſt filling, and ſatisfying; and *one* that cannot be loſt, except we wilfully thruſt him from us. *Fear* of God hath no *torment*; 'Tis no *ſlaviſh* dread of his *greatneſs* and *power*; but a *reverence* of his *perfections*, and a *lothneſs* to offend him; and this *diſpoſeth* us alſo for the *communications* of his grace, and love, *Pſ.* lxxxv. 9 And this it doth by *congruity*, and its *own nature*; which is to be ſaid likewiſe of the others. So that they would make thoſe *happy* that practiſe them, whether they had been poſitively enjoyn'd, or not; And though no *expreſs*

rewards

rewards had been annext unto them.

There are other two acts of worship which Christianity requires, which are *instituted* and *positive*, and respect *Christ* our *Lord*; They are, the *Sacraments*, *Baptism*, and the *Lords Supper*; both which are *holy Rites*, of high signification; and *seals* of an excellent *Covenant* between God and us, assuring us of *pardon* of sins, and all divine *favours*, upon the conditions of our *Faith*, and *repentance*; and more firmly obliging us to holy *obedience*, and *dependance*; The only *way* in which we can be happy. Whence we see briefly, that all the parts of *worship* which Christianity binds upon us, tend to our *perfection*, and *Felicity*.

And all the *vertues* that it com-

mands, do the same; both those that respect us in a *personal*, and those others that relate to us as *members* of *Societies*. Thus *humility* recommended, *Mat.* v. 3. *Meekness* bleſt, *v.* 5. *purity*, v. 8. are vertues that accompliſh our *particular* perſons, and make us *happy* in our ſelves. For of *Pride cometh Contention*, Prov. xiii. 10. And a great part of our troubles ariſe from *ſtomach* and *ſelf-will*, all which humility cures. And *meekneſs* alſo takes away the occaſions of the numerous miſchiefs we run into through the *rage* and diſorder of our paſſions; and 'tis in it ſelf a *great beauty* and ornament, ſince it ariſeth from the *due order*, and *government* of our *faculties*. *Purity* alſo, which comprehends *temperance* of all ſorts, frees us from the tormenting *importunity* of

of thoſe *deſires*, that drag us out of our ſelves, and expoſe us to *ſin*, and *folly*, and *temptation*, and make us exceeding miſerable; beſides which it is a perfection that renders us *like* unto God, and the bleſt *Spirits* of the higheſt rank. And Chriſtian vertues do not only accompliſh, and make us happy in our *particular* perſons, but in the more *publique* capacity alſo; They diſpoſe us to a *quiet* obedience to our *governours* without *murmuring*, and *complaining*; and thereby the publique *peace* is ſecured; and all good things elſe in *that*.

But there are *other vertues* that Chriſtianity enjoyns, which have a more direct tendency to the *happineſs* of *others*, as *Juſtice*, Mat. vii. 12. *Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. *Loyalty*, Rom. xiii. and *all* other *publique* vertues

may, I think, be comprehended under *these*. Where there is no *Justice*, every man preys upon another, and no mans property is safe. Where *Charity* is wanting, Jealousies, hatreds, envyings, back-bitings, and cruelties abound, which render the world deplorably unhappy. Where there is not *Loyalty*, and *conscionable submission* to Governours, the *publique* is upon every occasion of commotion, involv'd in infinite miseries, and disasters. So that all the *precepts* of our *Religion* are in their own nature *proper instruments* to make *us happy*; and they had been *methods* of *Felicity* to be chosen by all reasonable creatures, though they had never been required by so great, and so sacred an Authority.

These things I have said, because

I

I could not chooſe but take this occaſion to recommend the *excellency*, and *reaſonableneſs* of our Religion; And I have done it but only in brief hints, becauſe it ariſeth but upon a *Corollary* from my main ſubject, and from *this* I infer,

Sect. III.

(III) **That Chriſtianity is the height, and perfection of morality.** They *both* tend to the real bettering, and accompliſhment of humane nature: But the *rules* and *meaſures* of *moral Philoſophy* were weak and imperfect till *Chriſt Jeſus* came; *He confirmed* and *enforced* all thoſe *precepts* of vertue, that were *written* upon our hearts; and *cleared* them from many *corruptions* that were

grown upon them, through ignorance and vice, the *glosses* of the *Jews*, and *false* conceits of the *Gentiles*; and he inforced them anew by his *Authority*, and the knowledg he gave of *divine aids*, and greater *rewards*, and *punishments*, then were understood before; yea he *inlarged* it in some instances, such as *loving enemies*, and *forgiving injuries*. Thus *Christ Jesus* taught *morality*, *viz.* the *way of living like men*; And the 5. Chapter of *Matthew* is an excellent *Lecture* of *this* kind.

So that to disparage *morality*, is to *disgrace Christianity* it self; and to vilifie *one* of the ends of Christs coming into the world. For all *Religion* and all *duties* respect either *God*, our *neighbour*, or *our selves*, and the duties that relate to these *two last*, are *moral vertues*. The Apostle

stle St. *James* counted *these Moralities* of *visiting* the *Widow* and *Fatherless*, to be the *pure Religion* and *undefiled*. Jam. i. 17. And the Prophet *Micah* intimates, that those *moral* virtues of *justice* and *mercy*, were some of the main things that God required of us, *Mich.* vi. 8. Our Saviour saith, that the *whole Law* is summ'd up in *these* two, to *love God* with *all* our souls, and our *neighbour*, as *our selves*, Math. xxii. 13. which *latter* contains the duties of *morality*. And that which the *grace* of God in the Gospel *teacheth*, according to St *Paul* is, to *live soberly, righteously*, and *godly in this present world*, Tit. ii. 11. There is no *godliness* without *morality*. All the *fruits* of the *Spirit* reckon'd up *Gal.* v. 22. are *moral virtues*. And when we are commanded to *grow*

in

in grace, 2 Pet. iii. 18. *vertue* is partly underſtood. For one branch of what is call'd *Grace* in us, is *moral* vertue, produced by *divine* aids, *Chriſtian* principles, and incouragements; though 'tis true, the word is extended to thoſe duties that relate immediately to God alſo.

By which we ſee how *ignorantly*, and *dangerouſly* thoſe people talk, that diſparage *morality* as a dull, lame thing of no account, or reckoning. Upon this the *Religion* of the 2d. Table is by too many neglected; and the whole *myſtery* of the *new Godlineſs* is lay'd in *frequent hearing*, and devout *ſeraphick talk*, *luſcious phancies*, *new lights*, *incomes*, *manifeſtations*, *ſealings*, *in-dwellings*, and ſuch like. Thus *Antinomianiſm*, and all kinds of *Phanaticiſm* have made their way by the diſparagement of

morality,

morality, and men have learnt to believe themſelves the *choſen, pretious* people, while their *hearts* have been full of *malice*, and *bitterneſs*, and their hands of *violence*, while they *deſpiſed dominions*, and *ſpoke evil of dignities*, *rebel'd* againſt the *Government*, deſtroyed *publique* peace, and endeavoured to bring *all* into *miſery*, and *confuſions*. 'Tis this diabolical project of dividing *morality* from *Religion*, that hath given riſe and occaſion to all *theſe villanies*. And while the practiſers of ſuch things have aſſumed the name of the *only godly*, *Godlineſs* it ſelf hath been brought into *diſgrace* by them; and *Atheiſm* incouraged to ſhew it ſelf, in open *defiance* to *Religion*. Yea, through the *indiſcretions*, and inconſiderateneſs of *ſome preachers*, the *phantaſtry*, and vain babble

babble of *others*, and the general *disposition* of the people to *admire* what makes a great *shew*, and pretends to more then ordinary *spirituality*; things are, in many places, come to that pass, that those who teach *Christian vertue*, and *Religion*, in *plainness* and *simplicity* without senseless *phrases*, and phantastick *affectations*, shall be reckon'd for *dry moralists*, and such as understand nothing of the *life*, and *power* of *Godliness*. Yea, those people have been so long used to *gibberish* and *canting*, that they cannot understand *plain sense*; and *vertue* is become such a stranger to their *ears*, that when they hear it spoken of in a pulpit, they count the *preacher* a broacher of *new divinity*; and one that would teach the *way to heaven* by *Philosophy*: And he escapes

ſcapes well, if they do not ſay, That he is an *Atheiſt*; or that he would reconcile us to *Gentiliſm*, and *Heathen Worſhip*. The danger and vanity of which *ignorant* humour, the *contempt* of *morality*, is apparent in the whole ſcope of my Diſcourſe, and therefore I add no more concerning it here; but proceed to another Inference, which is,

Sect. IV.

(IV.) **That Grace and the new Nature, make their Way by Degrees on the ſoul**; for the *difficulties* will not be *removed*, nor the *corrupt nature* ſubdued all at *once*. *Habits* that grow by *repeated* acts, time, and continuance, will not be *expelled* in a *moment*. No man can become greatly *evil* or *good* on

a *ſudden*. *The Path of the juſt ſhines more and more to a perfect day*, Prov. iv. 18. We do not jump from *darkneſs* into full *light*. We are not fully ſanctified and converted in an *inſtant*. The *day* begins in an *inſenſible* dawn, and the *Kingdom of heaven is like a grain of Muſtard ſeed*, Mat. xiii. 31. It doth not *ſtart* up preſently to the *ſtature* of a *tree*. The *Divine* birth begins like the *Natural*, in an imperfect *embryo*.

There are ſome *ſeeds* of *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs* that God hath ſown in our natures; *theſe* are excited by the Divine Grace and Spirit to *convictions*, which proceed to *purpoſes*; *theſe* to *reſolutions*, and thence we paſs to *abſtinence* from all *groſs ſins*, and the *performance* of *outward Duties*; and ſo at laſt by degrees, to *vigorous attempts*, for the

deſtruction

deſtruction of *evil habits* and *inclinations*. When *Grace* is arrived to *this* eminent growth, 'tis very *viſible*, as the Plant is when 'tis above the ground: But the *beginnings* of *Converſion* are not ordinarily *perceived*.

So that to catechize men about the *punctual time*, and *circumſtances* of their *Converſion*, is an *idle* device, and a great temptation to *vanity* and *lying*. Who can tell the exact moment when the *night ends*, and the *dawn enters*? 'Tis true indeed, the *paſſage* from the *exceſſes* of Wickedneſs, which begins in ſome extraordinary horrors and convictions, is ſometimes very notable; but 'tis not not *ſo* in *all* or *moſt*. The time of St. *Paul*'s Converſion was eminent, but that change was from *great contrarieties* and *miraculous*, and there-

therefore 'tis not to be drawn into inſtance. Both the *beginnings* and *minute* progreſſions of Grace, are uſually undiſcerned: We cannot ſee the *Graſs* juſt putting out of the earth, or actually growing; but yet we find that it doth both. And *Grace* is better known in its *fruits*, than in its *riſe*. By their *Fruits ye ſhall know them*, ſaith our Saviour, Mat. xii. 33. and the *ſame* way we may know our ſelves.

Sect. V.

(V.) **We ſee that there is an Animal as well as a Divine Religion:** A Religion that is but the *effect* and *modification* of *complexion*, *natural fear*, and *ſelf love*. How far *theſe* will go, we have ſeen, and how ſhort it will prove in the end.

end. The not noting *this* hath been the ſad occaſion of deceiving many. Some obſerving great *heats* of *zeal* and *devotion* in the *modern Phariſees*, take theſe to be the *Saints* and *good people*; believing all the *glorious* things which they aſſume to themſelves: When *others*, that know them to be *envious* and *malitious*, *unjuſt* and *covetous*, *proud* and *ungovernable*, and cannot therefore look on them as ſuch *choiſe holy* people, are apt to affirm all to be *hypocriſie* and *feigning*. In which ſentences, *both* are miſtaken for want of knowing that there is a *meer Animal Religion*, that will produce very *ſpecious* and *glorious* effects. So that though the *Phariſee* Prays vehemently, and Faſts ſeverely, and talks much of the love of God, and delights greatly in hearing and pious Diſcourſe, and

will ſuffer all things for what he calls his conſcience; yet he is not to be concluded a *Saint* from *hence*, becauſe the *meer Animal* Religion may put it ſelf forth in all *theſe expreſſions*.

And though *this Profeſſor* be a *bad* man, *proud* and *covetous*, *malicious* and *cenſorious*, *ſacrilegious* and *Rebellious*, yet we cannot thence be aſſured that he is an *Hypocrite*, in one ſenſe, *viz.* ſuch an one as *feigns all that he pretends*: But we may believe that he is really ſo affected with *Hearing*, and *Praying*, and *devout Company*, as he makes ſhew, and yet for all *this*, not alter our opinion of his being an *evil* man: ſince the *Animal* Religion will go as far as the things in which he glories.

There is nothing whereby the common people are drawn more eaſily

eaſily into the ways of *Sects* and *Separations*, then by the obſervation of the *zeal* and *devotion* of *thoſe* of the *factions*: *Theſe* they take to be *Religion*, and the great matters of *Godlineſs*, and *thoſe* the *religious* and *only godly* people. And ſo firſt they conceive a great opinion of them, and then follow them whitherſoever they lead. For the generality of men are tempted into *Schiſm* and *Parties*, not ſo much by the *arguments* of *Fanaticks*, as by the *opinion* of their *Godlineſs*, which opinion is grounded upon *thoſe* things, which may ariſe from the *meer Animal Religion*, and very commonly do ſo. This they underſtand not, and by *this ignorance* are betrayed into the ſnare of *Separation*, to the diſturbance of the *Peace* of the *Church*, and their *own great hurt* and *inconvenience*.

Whereas could they be made to know and consider that *complexion* and *natural* passions may bring forth *all these fruits*, they might be secured by this means against the *tempting* imposture; and learn that *Meekness* and *Patience*, *Affability* and *Charity*, *Justice*, and a *Peaceable*, *humble temper*, are better arguments of *Saintship* than all *these*. Thus a great *mischief* might be prevented; and there is *another* also that might be remedied by the *same* Observation: The inconvenience is this,

While the enemies of Factions object *Hypocrisie* to them, affirming that all they *do* and *say*, is meer *personating* and *pretence*; they confirm and setle those people in their way; for many of them *know*, that they are in *earnest*, and consequently that their opposers are mistaken in their judgments

ments concerning them; by which they are better eſtabliſht in their own good opinion, and hardned againſt conviction; whereas did they conſider ſuch things as I have ſuggeſted, about the *Animal Religion*, and grant to them that they may be *ſerious*, believe themſelves infinitely, and feel all thoſe Warmths, which they pretend, and yet be *evil men*, and far enough from being *godly*; Did they ſhew them that all their *zeal* and *Devotion*, and more and greater than *theirs*, may ariſe from a principle that hath nothing *Divine* and *ſupernatural* in it: They would thereby ſtrike them in the *right vein*, and bring them down from the high perch, whereon, by their *falſe marks*, they had placed themſelves; and thereby diſabuſe them, and prevent the abuſe of others.

Sect. VI.

(VI.) **We see how we may know our state, whether it be that of Grace and Life; or the other sad one of Unregeneracy and Death.** The *state* of *Grace* is a *motion towards the recovery of the Divine Image, and a perfect victory over our selves, and all corrupt inclinations and affections.* The state of *Unregeneracy* and *Death*, is the *continuance under the power and prevalency of sense, passion, and evil habits.*

When 'tis a question to our selves, in which of *these* states we are; it must be supposed that we are arrived to *something* of Religion: For the grosly wicked cannot but know what their condition is. And the way

way I would propoſe to thoſe others, who are yet *uncertain*, is *this*, *viz.* To take notice,

Whether they really deſign, and make any progreſs in Goodneſs. *Every motion* indeed cannot be *felt* or *perceived*; but if we go on, though never ſo inſenſibly, time will ſhew that we are grown. If we *conſider* what are our *particular defects*, and ſtudiouſly apply *proper* inſtruments to remove them; if we find ſucceſs in thoſe indeavours, and that we are *better* this year, than we were the former; That our *Paſſions* are *better* governed, and our *inordinate affections* more *reſtrained*, and our *evil habits* and *inclinations leſs* powerful with us, 'tis an *infallible ſign*, that we *live* and are in a *ſtate* of *Grace*; that we ſhall at laſt arrive *to a perfect man in Chriſt*

Jesus, Eph. iv. 13. and shall *attain if we faint not*, 2 Cor. iv 1. whereas on the other hand, If we come to some *hopeful* pitch, and *stand still* there; If *sin* and *temptation* be as *powerful* with us *now*, as *they* were a year ago, and our *inclinations* and *passions* just at the same pass, we are in a *bad* state, and *dead*. While the Plant *grows*, it *lives* and may become a *great tree*, though at present it be but *small*: whereas *that* whose stature is *bigger*, and more *promising*, if it *proceeds* not, *decaies* and comes to nothing.

Though we are *imperfect*, if we are *striving* and going *towards* perfection, God overlooks our *Infirmities*, and *pardons* them for Christ's sake. This is our *sincerity*, and an *effect* of *true Faith*. But if on the other hand, we think our selves *well*,

and

and do not always attempt *forwards*, our *ſtate* is *bad*, and our *ſins* will be *imputed*: Be our pretences what they will, our *Faith* is not *ſincere*, and will not ſtead us.

When we get to a certain *pitch* in *Religion*, and make *that* our *ſtate*, 'tis an argument that our *Religion* was *meerly Animal*; and but a *mode* of *complexion*, *ſelf love* and *natural fear*. When we overcome *ſome* ſins, and are willing to ſpare and cheriſh *others*, 'tis a ſign that we are not *ſincere* in our attempts upon *any*, and that what we have done, was not performed upon *good* and *divine* motives.

Sincerity is diſcovered by growth, and this is the ſureſt *mark* that I know of *Tryal*. So that we have no reaſon to *preſume*, though, as we think, we have gone a *great way*;

if

if we *go not on.* Nor on the other ſide, have we any to *deſpair*, though our preſent *attainments* are but *ſmall*, if we are *proceeding*. The *buds* and tendereſt *bloſſoms* of Divine *Grace*, are acceptable to God; when the *faireſt leaves* of the *meer Animal Religion* are *nothing* in his eſtimate.

This is a great advantage we have from the Goſpel, that *imperfection* will be accepted, where there is *ſincerity*; whereas according to the meaſures of exact and rigorous Juſtice, no man could be made happy in the high degree of glory, but *he* that was *perfect*, and whoſe *victories* were *abſolute*.

SECT.

Sect. VII.

(VII.) IT may be collected from our Diſcourſe, wherein the **Power of Godlineſs** conſiſts, *viz.* **In a progreſs towards perfection, and an intire victory over all the evils of our Natures.** The *Forms* of *Godlineſs* are not only in the *ceremonies* of *Worſhip*, and external actions of *feigned* Piety; But all the *fine* things of the *Animal* Religion, I have mentioned, are of *this kind*, and they are the *worſt* ſort: By the *groſſer Forms* men hardly deceive *others*; by *theſe* they effectually *gull themſelves*. So that many that vehemently *oppoſe Forms*, are the greateſt *Formaliſts* themſelves. *Forms* of Worſhip may well agree with the *Power* of *Godlineſs*; when

when as *zeal* againſt *Forms*, *may* be a *Form it ſelf*; whatever makes *ſhew* of *Religion*, and doth not make us *better*, that's a *Form*, at leaſt to *us*. There are *Spiritual Forms*, as well as *thoſe* of the other ſort, and *theſe* are moſt *deadly*. *Poyſon* is worſt in *Aqua-Vitæ*. He that ſpeaks his Prayers *ex tempore* with *vehemence* and *lowdneſs*, if he ſtrive not againſt his *ill nature* and *ſelf will*, is as much a *Formaliſt*, as *he* that tells his *Prayers* by his *Beads*, and *underſtands* not one word he ſaith. And thoſe that run away from *Forms* in *Churches*, meet more dangerous *ones* in *Barns* and *private corners*. *Orthodox Opinions*, *devout Phraſes*, *ſet Looks*, *melting Tones*, *affected Sighs*, and *vehement Raptures*, are often *meer Forms* of *Godlineſs*, that proceed from the *Animal* Religion, which *it ſelf* is a *Form* likewiſe.

wiſe. O that the obſervers of ſo many *motes* in their *Brothers eye*, would learn to throw out the *Beams* of their own!

The Form of Godlineſs that pretends it ſelf to be *no more*, is not *ſo hurtful*: But the *Forms*, that call themſelves the *Power*, are *deadly*. 'Tis the *Formality* and *Superſtition* of *Separatiſts* that keeps on the *Separation*: *They* contend for *phancies* and *arbitrary* trifles, *We* for *order* and *obedience*. The People are abuſed by *names*, and being frighted by the *ſhadows* of *Superſtition* and *Formality*, they run into the worſt *Formality*, and *ſillieſt Superſtition* in the World. *The Kingdom of heaven conſiſts not in meats and drinks*, Rom. xiv. 17. neither in *Circumciſion*, nor *Uncircumciſion*, 1 Cor. vii. 19. not in *zeal for* little things, nor *againſt* them; both

both the one and the other are equally *formal.*

The *power* of Religion lies in *using* Divine *aids heartily* and *constantly*, in order to the overcoming the *Difficulties* of our *way.* This *Godliness* is not exercised so much in *reforming others*, as *our selves*: The chief design is to govern *within*, and not to make Laws for the *World without us.* This is that *Wisdom* that is from *above*, which is *pure* and *peaceable*, Jam. iii. 17. It makes no *noise* and bluster *abroad*, but quietly minds its own business at home.

So that certainly the *best* men have not always had the greatest *fame* for *Godliness*; as the *wisest* have very seldom been the most *popular.* They are the *effects* of the *Animal Religion* that make the *biggest shew.* The voice of true Religion is *heard in quiet*,

quiet, it ſounds not in the corners of the ſtreet. The *power* of *Godlineſs* is ſeen in *Juſtice*, *Meekneſs*, *Humility*, and *Charity*, things that look not ſo ſplendidly as the *Spiritual Forms*.

And thus of the *INFERENCES* and *COROLLARIES* that may be drawn from my Diſcourſe, which though they cannot all be inferred from any of its minute and ſeparated parts, yet they lie in the deſign and contexture of it.

CHAP.

Chap. V.

Practical Advice for a CONCLUSION.

I Haſten now to **Advice** for **Practice**. The way of Happineſs is *difficult*, but the *difficulties* may be overcome by *ſtriving*. A *little* will *not do*; *many ſeekers are ſhut out*; what remains then, but that we perſwade our ſelves to *ſtrive*, and that *diligently*, with *conſtant reſolution* and *endeavour*.

We were made for Happineſs, and Happineſs all the World ſeeks: *Who will ſhew us any good?* Pſal.iv.6. is the voice of all the Creatures. We have *ſought* it long in *emptineſs*, and

and *ſhadows*; and that ſearch hath ſtill ended in ſhame and diſappointment. Where *true ſubſtantial Felicity* is we know, and the *Way we know*, Joh. xiv. 4. It is not hid from us in *Clouds* and *thick Darkneſs*; or if it were, 'twere worth our pains to ſearch after it. It is not at ſo great a *diſtance*, but it may be ſeen, yea, it may be brought ſo near as to be *felt*. Though the *way* is *ſtreight*, yet 'tis *certain*; or if it were otherwiſe, who would not venture his pains upon the *poſſibility* of ſuch an *iſſue*? *Many Difficulties* are in it; but our *Incouragements* and *Aſſiſtances* are *infinite*. The *love* of *God*, and the *gift* of his *ſon*; the *bloud* of *Chriſt*, and his *interceſſion*; the *aids* of the *Spirit*, and the *directions* of the *Goſpel*: the *Invitations* and *Promiſes*, the rare *Precepts*, and incomparable *Exam-*

ples of those holy men that have gone before us. These are mighty *helps* and great *motives* to assist us in *striving*, and to quicken us to it.

Let us then arise in the strength of *Faith*, and in the incouragement of *those aids*, and attempt with courage upon the *Difficulties* of our way. Let us ingage our *deepest Resolutions*, and most *diligent endeavours*. Here is no need to *deliberate*, the things are *necessary*, the *benefits unspeakable*, and the *event* will be *glorious*. It is no Question, I hope, *whether God, or the Creature is to be first chosen*; *whether Heaven or Hell be better?* and therefore there is no cause that we should *stay* and *consider*; we cannot be *rash here*, we cannot *hurt* our selves by a too *sudden ingagement*, we have delayed *too long* already, and every *moment* we

sit

ſit ſtill, is *one* loſt to our *Duty*, and our *Happineſs*. Let us reſolve then, and *begin* with *courage*, and *proceed* with *diligence*, 'tis our *End* and *Felicity* for which we are to ſtrive; and every thing is *active* for its End and Perfection.

All *Creatures* are *diligent* in ſerving the Deſigns of Providence; the *Heavens* are in reſtleſs *motion*, and the *Clouds* are ſtill carrying about their *fruitful Waters*; the *ſluggiſh Earth* it ſelf is always putting forth in variety of *Trees*, and *Graſs*, and *Flowers*; the *Rivers* run towards the Sea, the *Brooks* move towards *them*, and the *Sea* within it ſelf. Thus all things even in *inanimate* Nature may mind us of acting towards our end. And if we look a little higher, the *Beaſts* of the Field, the *Fowls*, and *Cattel*, and *creeping* things are diligent in

ſtriving after the *good* and *perfection* of their Natures, and *Solomon* ſends the Sluggard to thoſe little *Inſects* the *Ant* and *Bee*, to teach him activity and diligence, *Prov.* vi. 6. And ſhall the *Beaſts* act more *reaſonably* than the profeſſed Sons of *Reaſon*? May it not ſhame *us*, that we need *inſtruction* from the Creatures that have no *underſtanding*? With what face can we carry our heads ſo high, and look down with Contempt upon inferiour Animals, when *they* live more *wiſely* and more *regularly*, than we.

The Sum is, *All things* are inceſſantly *moving towards an End*; and Happineſs is *ours*, which therefore ſhould ingage our moſt careful Thoughts, and moſt active Endeavours.

We are ſolicitous and diligent about

about things of infinitely *leſs* moment, and in effect of *none*, viz. *uncertain* Riches, *ſenſual* Pleaſures, and *worldly* Honours; though the way to *theſe* is ſufficiently *difficult* and *uneaſie*, yet we are not *diſcouraged*; we attempt all thoſe *Difficulties* with an *obſtinate* Courage, though without promiſe of any *equal* aſſiſtance, or aſſurance of ſucceſs. We are often *defeated* in our purſuits, and yet we *go on*. We are *overmaſter'd* by *croſs* events, and yet we *try again* We *miſs* our *happineſs*, when we have attain'd our *end*, and yet we are as *active* in courting diſappointment another time: either we attain not the *things* we ſeek, or find no *true ſatisfaction* in *them*, or they *die* in our hands *preſently*, and yet we *ſtrive*. And doth not this *activity* about *uncertain*, *unſatisfying Triſles*, ſhame-

fully reprove our Negligence in reference to our *great End*, *Happineſs*, and *Perfection*; In ſtriving for which we have all the *powers* of *Heaven* to *aid* us, and the *Word* of God, and the *Bloud* of his Son, and the *experience* of all that ever try'd, to aſſure us that we ſhall neither fail of the *things* we *ſeek*, nor of the *pleaſure* that we *expect* from them. And why then do we *lazily* ſit down, and with the Sluggard ſay, *There is a Lion in the way*, while we deſpiſe greater diſcouragements, when vain things are to be ſought? The Merchant doth not give off, becauſe there are Storms, and the numerous Dangers of the Deep to be met with in his way to the *Indies*; nor the Souldier lay by his Arms, becauſe of the hazards and toils of War. And do we act *courageouſly* for *petty* purchaſes;

purchaſes; and faint and deſpond when we are to *ſtrive* for *Crowns* and *eternal* Glories?

'Tis true indeed our own *natural* ſtrength is *ſmall*, in proportion to the *Difficulties* we are to encounter; but the *Grace of God is ſufficient for us*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. and we may do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us, *Phil.* iv. 13. Nature is *weak*, and *imperfect*, but we are not left in the condition of *meer nature*: *For we are not under the Law, but under Grace*, Rom. vi. 14. We are under the *influences* of the *holy Spirit*, which will remove the *mountains*, and plain the way before us, if we take care to ingage thoſe aids by *Faith* and *ſincere* endeavour.

For this we may be ſure of, That *God will never be wanting to us*, if we are not *ſo* unto *our ſelves*. So that

the caſe as to our *natural inability*, and the *aſſiſtance* of Gods *Spirit*, ſeems to be thus. A man in a Boat is carried from the Harbour he deſigns, by the violence of the Current; he is is not able only by plying of the Oar, to overcome the reſiſtance of the Tide; but a gentle Gale blows with him, which will not of it ſelf neither carry him up againſt the Torrent: *Neither* of them will do it *ſingly*: But if he *hoiſt* the *ſail*, and uſe the *Oar too*, this *united* force prevails; and he gets happily to the Harbour. This methinks reſembles our Condition; we are carried down the Torrent of *evil Inclinations* and *Affections*, our own *unaided* force is too *little* for that *great* force: but the *Holy Spirit* is with us, It breaths upon us, and is ready to aſſiſt, if we are *ſo* to uſe it, and by the ſuper-

addition

addition and ingagement of thoſe bleſſed Aids, there is no evil in our natures but may be overcome. So that we have no reaſon to be diſcouraged at the apprehenſion of our *impotence, out of Weakneſs we ſhall be made ſtrong*, Heb. xi. 24. If we imploy our *Talent*, though it be but a very *ſmall* one, we ſhall have *more*, Mat. xxv. 29. And if we *accept* of thoſe divine helps, and *uſe* them, what was before, to meer *natural* conſideration, *uneaſie*, will be pleaſant and ſweetly reliſhing.

One of the greateſt *Difficulties* in the way of Religion, is to *begin*: the *firſt* ſteps are *rougheſt* to thoſe feet that have been unaccuſtomed to it. The helps and manifold incouragements we ſhall meet with in the *Progreſs*, will render it more *agreeable* and *delightſome*. Thoſe very *toils* will

will be *grateful*; and we know there is ſcarce any great *ſenſe* of *pleaſure*, but where there is ſome *Difficulty* and *Pain*. Even our *Work* it ſelf will be *Wages*. And 'tis not only the *End* of Wiſdom that is *pleaſantneſs*, but the *very way*, Prov. iii. 17. So that though we are call'd upon to *ſtrive*, and to *run*, and to *fight*, (which words import Labour) yet we are not required to quit our *pleaſures*, but to *change* the *objects* of them; to leave the *delights* of *ſwine* for *thoſe* of *Angels*; *ſenſual* for *ſpiritual* Satisfactions.

Thus all things incourage, and invite us to *ſtrive*; God calls upon us, and our own *Intereſts* call; *Chriſt Jeſus* came to ingage us to this Work, and the *Holy Spirit* waits to aſſiſt it. If notwithſtanding all this, we *ſit ſtill*, our Negligence will

will be *inexcuſable* and *fatal*: or if we *ariſe*, and go a *little* forward, and then lay us down to take our *eaſe* and *reſt*, our ſtate in the judgment of one that knew, will be *worſe*, more *deſperate*, and *excuſeleſs*, 2 Pet. ii. 21.

I *conclude* all then, in the words of the bleſſed *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. xv. *Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord*: To him be Glory, and Honour henceforth, and for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

THE CONTENTS.

AN INTRODUCTION, Page 1.

CHAP. I.

There are great **Difficulties** *in* Religion. *Religion is not hard to be understood. The* Difficulties *arise* (1) *from the* Depravities *of our* Natures, (2) *from the* Influences *of the* senses, (3) *from the* disorder *of our* passions, (4) *from the* power *of* Custom, (5) *from* evil example, *and* (6) *from* Worldly interests *and* ingagements. p. 5

CHAP. II.

That the Difficulties may be overcome. *The* Instruments *whereby it may be done, viz.*

viz. Faith, Prayer, *and* active endeavour. *They are* particularly *conſider'd. The* Method *of endeavour propoſed in* plain *and* practicable Rules. *Some* Qualifications *of* thoſe Rules. p. 31

Chap. III.

The danger of miſtaking in the Marks *and* Meaſures *of* Godlineſs. *Inſtances of the meer* **Animal Religion**; *how* far *it may go, in* Faith, *in* Prayer, *and in* Endeavour, *diſcourſed in ſeveral Particulars; and therein the whole* myſtery *of the* Modern Phariſaick Godlineſs *is diſcovered, and ſhewn to be* ſhort *and* inſufficient. Objections *againſt the ſeverity of the Diſcourſe, anſwered.* p.62

Chap. IV.

INFERENCES from the *whole,* concerning, (1) *The true notion of a ſtate of Grace and Nature.* (2) *The great deſign of Religion to perfect humane nature.* (3) *The agreement and oneneſs of Chriſtianity and Morality.* (4) *The method*

The Contents.

method of Grace on the ſouls of men. (5) *The nature of the Animal Religion.* (6) *The certain mark whereby to know our ſtate.* (7) *The power of Godlineſs, and the Forms of it.* . p. 120

CHAP. V.

Practical Advice for a CONCLUSION. p. 160

The End.